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THE
VISION OF CORTES,

CAIN,

AND



OTHER POEMS.

BY W. GILMORE SIMMS, JR.

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TO

JAMES L. PETIGRU, ESQ.

This volume, the result of a few idle hours in
the intervals of business, is respectfully inscribed
by

THE AUTHOR.

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THE
VISION OF CORTES.

A POEM.

———If the lightning, in its wrath,
The waving boughs with fury scathe,
The massy trunk the ruin feels,
And never more a leaf reveals.

BYRON—*Parasine*.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The following Poem was originally introduced in one of larger dimensions on the subject of the Incas, which I was wise enough to destroy. How far I may have erred in permitting the following fragment (for it is little more) to escape the same fate, the reader, and not myself, will determine.

THE
VISION OF CORTES.

I.

ONCE, and the gallant sword of Spain,
Oppos'd the fierce invader,
Ere, in the Gothic(1) Roderick's reign,
Her own base son(2) betray'd her:
When freemen stood on hill and glade,
And blood gush'd forth from fountains,
Where, gallant hearts, her ramparts made,
As firm as her own mountains!
And, conquerors of the tawny Moor,
They seek new countries to explore;
Led by the luckless Genoese,
To lands, beyond undreamt-of-seas,
Lords of the soil at home, the brave,
With idle weapons, cross'd the wave,
Sanguine to reap in foreign lands,
Full guerdon for their steel-clad bands;
While high, to lead the way, they rear'd
The blessed cross, nor danger fear'd,

While, base enthusiasts, it came,
A beacon light to death and flame.(3)

II.

The chieftain slumber'd in his tent,
Thro' the deep midnight hour,
Enfeebled, for his strength was spent
In deeds of warlike power—
The leader of the Spanish might,
Where sleep had stilly bound him,
Lay, ready arm'd for sudden fight,
But with no guard around him.
'Twas he, that dared 'gainst free-born foe,
To win the wealth of Mexico!
On Chalco's height, Cholula's wall,
Ordain'd not by his foe to fall,
The brave barbarian paused, to scan
The features of the giant man;
And, in his deeds of strength, his blade,
The lion-heart, that ne'er afraid,
Leap'd onward, and where'er he flew,
Bore unresisting Fate, to do
The savage purpose of a breast,
Where human feelings lay, repress,
Believed, as frightened back, he ran,
Some demon fill'd the form of man.

III.

He had been toiling thro' the day—
And, tho' victory crown'd him,
Yet, once its palm was torn away,
As the fight thicken'd round him—
Onward, by Guatimozin(4) led,
Like gath'ring clouds at even,
The children of the bright sun(5) sped,
To win the wealth of Heaven!

At once, the splendors of thy name,
Brave Cortes, darken'd as they came;
One moment, sunk thy warriors back,
Before the torrent's thundering track;
One moment did thine eagle bend
His sunward gaze, and downward tend;
And thou—thy warrior steed o'erthrown,
A victim, 'mid the crowd alone,
Thy soldiers lost, and thine own blood,
Forth streaming, in impetuous flood,
Not even the chance remains to flee—
But that is not a thought for thee.(6)

IV.

Now does their war-drum sound aloud,
Upon their highest tower,
Since he, their god of war,(7) had bow'd
The invader to their power.

How rich the sacrifice must be,
Oh freedom, at thy altar shrine,
Where'er thy blessed stars may shine,
Of tyrants' instruments to thee!
Once more, the elated savage dreams
Of life, land, love and freedom;
And with the rush of mountain streams
Bids their young monarch lead 'em.
Exulting, came their numbers on,
To hail the triumph, more than won,
Since he, the Spanish chief, had bled,
And they, the Invincible, had fled!
He too, their nation's direst foe,
Whose very presence augur'd woe—
Within their pow'r—O! what must be
The living throb within the veins
Of men, who long inured to chains,
Now strike at last for liberty.
The aspect of despair is cast,
The slave is free—is free at last,
And like the unprisoned eagle, gaining
The lost ascent of clouds, where, straining
Each nervous pinion in the flight,
He bears him to the monarch light,
Freedom's own emblem, made for all,
Undim'd by cloud, unbent by thrall—
The native light, so oft adored
In earlier hours, at last restored.

V.

Is this the sole reward of toil—

The long tried toil of skill and power,
Arrested, in its march to spoil,

With the short conflict of an hour!

Is there no pride of nation—none

Of all that chivalry, that stood,
Till life was lost, or triumph won,

While all the Guadalate ran blood!

Shall men, who drove the sable Moor,

Forever, from their native shore,

Taught but to conquer or to die,

And in a school so fell and rife,

Forget their creed and backward fly?

That creed, which gives, in holy strife

A future for a present life;

And takes the cloud that dims our even,

To leave to truth, its own bright Heaven,

Unveil'd in its eternal light,

Before the true believer's sight—

Where Houris' smile and raptures stray,

To win the mortal coil away—

Shall men thus taught to die, to dare

The worst of deaths, with hope to share

That heaven of heavens, which ever beams

Upon the enthusiast's life of dreams.

Thus fly a savage race before,
When Heaven itself upon them streams—
Lose former fame, and win no more?

VI.

Where are these thoughts to wring them now,
Where are the early hopes that fed them,
The Cross's light upon each brow,
That, like a fire from heav'n, once led them?
Dream they, before a conquering foe,
To fly successful, o'er the waters,
Where, trembling with expecting glow,
Sit Spain's own sunny daughters?
Disdain was in that chieftain's eye,
Beyond the ire of battle high,
And, while his hoarse voice rang around,
More stirring than the trumpet's sound,
Bidding the brave again unite
In battle, with the unequal fight,
Upon his lip, scorn smiling played,
Derisive, of the tools he made;
And thus he spake, when, all in vain
He would renew the fight again.
"Now dastards, shall your flight be dear,
That ye do battle, be my care,
And if I fall, be yours to know
The stroke that fells me, lays ye low."

Close by his side, forever near,
A boy, even to that chieftain dear,
Came as his page—where foemen strike,
As in the courtly hall, alike.
Danger, nor toil, nor this last strait,
This bosom twin could separate!
His feeling, time, nor change could dim,
Fear'd by all else, yet loved by him,
To him he spoke—"Boy, raise your lance,
God, send you good deliverance—
This is a perilous hour for both,
Else now, our parting might be loth,
But, I remember me, your oath.
Drive your steel thro' your horse's neck,
There needs no spur, yet loose your check;
He'll leap the rank that girds us round,
And if he fail, repeat the wound—
Then gain, if yet ye can, the sound.
There, ere these dastards may be seen,
Put fire unto the brigantine,(8)
Or, guide her quickly from the shore,
And seek your native land once more—
My native land—but not for me,
Without this day's cloud passes o'er,
That native land again to see—
Say not you have beheld *them* fly,
But, that you've seen your chieftain die."

VII.

He bows, but makes him no reply,
Then o'er the heads of those surrounding,
His slight made jennet seems to fly,
Like deer o'er western prairies bounding,
When, sudden from the forest's gloom,
Upon the broad savannah's breaking,
Compell'd by inauspicious doom,
The traveller seeks a kinder home,
The one, so loved in youth, forsaking.
Amid her enemies she springs,
Then sudden, as impell'd by wings,
Convulsed by the fatal knife,
She leaps, and leaping, spends her life.
One glance the chieftain gives, and sees
The boy as free as southern breeze,
Unnoted, in the greater prize,
Within their grasp, before their eyes!
And, if perchance, his foemen by,
Beheld a tear drop fill his eye,
'Twere less at this assurance known,
Than, that his followers were his own!
Compell'd, as well as he, to make
A triumph of the very stake.

VIII.

He fights—the thickest of the fray—

His steel hath broke their serried lances,
And proudly now he stands at bay,
And not a foe advances.

“For country, freedom, monarch now,

On! Mexicans, nor cower
At one dark tyrant’s vengeful blow,
Within your very power.

The temples of your Gods behold,
Rifled by bigot slaves, for gold;
Your monarchs, children of the sun,
Who gilds whate’er he looks upon—
Lo! now, from rolling clouds of dun,
He rushes forth upon the skies,
To bid you to the sacrifice.

Our fathers’ dead—their ample thrones,
Their graves, their palaces, their bones,
Whate’er of sacred, good or grand,
Touch’d by these slaves with impious hand—
Strike for your dead—if not to gain
Your freedom, strike—and not in vain.”

Their monarch speaks, and his, their cause,
Nor in the conflict do they pause,
But closing round the Spanish chief,
His hope of rescue grows more brief

Yet still he strikes with giant blow,
The death of each adventurous foe;
Wild as the lion, circled round
By hunter's spear, he still is found,
'Tho' sinking 'neath repeated blows,
The sternest, savagest of foes.

IX.

One moment's pause he gains from fight,
A moment's glance he casts around him,
Where, hidden from his followers' sight,
The Mexicans surround him.
There is a triumph in his eye,
His lip exulting, curls in pride—
And dares he dream of victory,
Without one warrior at his side?
Perchance, with high regard to fame,
And glorious memory—deathless name,
He feels, that he, who bravely dies,
Surrounded by his enemies,
In death, wins many victories!
But lo! what splendor dims the sight—
Whence is that sky's unusual glory,
As when a volcano flames at night,
From some cloud-lifting promontory!
He speaks—as in that curling fire
His soul hath won its fierce desire,

And a stern joy upon his brow
Proclaims, even death were triumph now.

X.

“’Tis bravely done, my trusty boy!”
The chieftain spoke—unwonted joy,
Burst forth and kindled the dark eye,
That witness’d but his enemy,
With all a conqueror’s exstasy!
“Oh! would ye seek your land, brave men?
Why, seek it on that whirlwind, then—
For by my sword, your journey back,
Will find as perilous a track—
There, in that bright, and eddying flame,
Your vessels went—not as they came;
That blaze will lead to victory won—
On! for the Cross and glory—on.”
Each eye was turned, where brightly rose
The cloud, that flash’d with sudden light,
While all the far horizon glows
With hues, tho’ dark, yet strangely bright;
A hideous glare on all around,
The yet ascending columns flew;
And Mexico in that hour found
Full many an omen direly true;
While, thro’ the Spanish host, there went,
The enthusiast-spirit’s voice of heav’n,

And glad, as to a tournament,

The free bit to their steeds was given.

“Ho! for the rescue, men of Spain,

Ho! for the rescue, and regain

More than the brave can lose, and all

That still attends the warrior’s fall,

Who proudly stems the opposing tide,

Your glory, and Hispania’s pride!”

Thus o’er the field the signal ran,

And with the sight and sound began—

Each arm, and heart, and weapon true,

The glorious fray anew!

What can the savage chiefs oppose,

To battle of superior foes,

But rude, and ill-directed blows!

And Cortes’ name—itself a host,

Regains the ground its owner lost—

His giant form, conspicuous towering

Flies o’er the field, like meteor lowering,

A light, whose brightest shapes, assume

A deeper fixedness of gloom!

What can arrest *his* path of blood,

Who, in his passion’s fearful mood,

His very followers deem to be

Akin to the arch-enemy!

XII.

“Now is our time for triumph—On!

Brave followers of the Cross, and be
The Heaven, ye seek for, more than won,
When thus we crush idolatry!

One triumph now, and future times,
With conquest perch’d upon our brow,

Will half forget our many crimes,
In glancing o’er our victory now!”

’Tis Cortes speaks—and on he leads;
The gallant to heroic deeds;
Superior skill, and more than all,
Recover’d from his sudden fall,
He rushes thro’ the retiring flood,
And wades, with charger, deep in blood.

But who is he that stands at bay,
Alone, and stems the advancing fray?

An Indian by his garb—around
His brow, a golden fillet bound—

Within, with many a gem, is set
A rich and sparkling coronet—

Deserted by his trembling bands,
The royal Guatimozin stands,

And stems the current—but what might,
Alone, and taught not well in fight,

'Gainst veteran skill, can idly dare
Sustain the wide, unequal war!

XIII.

'The boy is at the Spaniard's side,
But all that warrior sees, is he,
Who, firm amid the shrinking tide,
Would still be, as he has been—free!
“Curse on these slaves!—’twere shame to stain
My scymitar in such lowly blood,
But that my glutless soul can drain,
At every happy stroke, a flood!”
Thus from the savage soldier, felt
The grimly mutter’d, sentence-knell—
Not his to strike ignoble foe,
’Till thousands, felt the single blow.
“Fall back and give them room to fly,
Tho’ there are still enough to die—
And ye may keep your hands in play,
Till ye have hewn a wider way;
Then hem these lowly wretches in,
For me, there’s braver spoil to win.”
And with couch’d lance and giant spring,
He battles with the Indian king,
One effort more, whose followers make,
The closing ranks of Spain, to break,

One blow for liberty and life,
And all is o'er, and hush'd the strife!
'The king is on the field, his foe,
Above him, with descending blow;
Before the hapless monarch's eyes,
Swim round the crowd, and reel the skies,
But not with fate, like this, he dies!
The grim-brow'd victor, to its sheath,
Return'd the blood-dy'd steel of death—
Paus'd for a moment, ere he bade
His followers stay the active blade,
Then turn'd his eyes afar, where lay
The city walls, his destin'd prey—
Leap'd on his steed, and led the way.

XIV.

The triumph is complete—the foe,
Routed, no longer seek the fight;
And thro' the gates of Mexico,
They rush, as settles down the night!
Victors and vanquish'd—and the din,
Shrieks of the dying, victor's cries,
With more than mortal turmoil, win
Ten thousand echoes from the skies.
Mad with the toil, the throng, the glare,
The glory, and the pomp of war—

Exulting in complete success,
The Spanish soldiers onward press
Among their foes, still numberless!
And ere the day is fully gone,
Mexico is lost and won!

XV.

What should succeed such victory?—

Why, wassailry, and laughter, wine,
Shouts, songs from gallant chivalry,

And prayers at brute devotion's shrine.
Drunk with success—the torches glare,

Now light the spacious walls, now throw,
Upon the silent river near,

A deadly and an awful glow.

The palace burns—awake the cry—

The palace burns—the flames are high;

And each infuriate soldier, hands

Some ruddier, more vindictive brands;

'Till in one awful blaze of light,

A ruin in unnatural might,

It curls in billowy seas of fire,

Ascending in a smoky spire,

'Till, toppling down, each heated wall

Is curved and bending to its fall—

The catapult, and down it goes,

Heedless, over friends and foes;

A moment's silence—and the rout,
Send up a mix'd and giddy shout.

XVI.

Will this appease the kindled souls,
Of those, who, mad with conquest, deem,
No land that blooms, no sea that rolls,
The proudest in enthusiast's dream,
Tho' bearing native demi-gods,
And born upon a lucky hour,
Can venture with the fearful odds,
Of their own wild, advent'rous pow'r!
The cry is forth—the sleuth-hound wakes,
An appetite, that nothing slakes;
And what shall feed his fury's rage,
What, shall that appetite assuage?
What, cool that fever in the brain?
Which reason seeks to calm, in vain—
What, still that tempest in the breast,
That will not fly, and cannot rest?—
Away—for other victims—bring
To sacrifice, a foe—a King!

XVII.

They've bound a monarch on the flame,
The iron, red-hot ribs are placed
Beneath his form, whom crime, nor shame,
Nor human failing e'er debased.

And Cortes stands above him now—

A demon's fury in his eye,
While calmness, on the monarch's brow,
Bespeaks a fearful apathy.

“A captive, and a nation's king!

If thou wouldst plume a fierer wing,
Go, bid thy followers quickly bring,
The splendors of thy favour'd land,
Without delay, with lavish hand—

The gold, the wealth that decks your halls,
The solid silver of your walls,

At once pour forth to greet our eyes,

Or, thou shalt fall the sacrifice,

For, that to idol gods thy knee,

Is bent in low idolatry,

And not to him by whose command,

We come to purify your land!”

XVIII.

There's a splendour 'neath yon cloud,

Ye may see the ray of light,

Like a spirit from its-shroud,

Bursting on the gazer's sight!

On the outer edge, like gold,

How it shadows still the dense,

And rugged vestment's every fold,

With a high magnificence.

So on Guatimozin's brow,
Gleam'd his scorn's unnatural glow,
Shining on his sullen mien,
Like the moon, with silver sheen,
On the sable robe of night,
Edging it with wavy light—
And his accents flow in scorn,
Tho' upon the engine torn.
“Greedy adventurer, dar'st thou say,
'Thy Gods have sent thee forth to prey
With tiger lip, upon the brave,
Whose land, by thee, is one wide grave,
Where sleep her murder'd sons, her king,
Each brave and generous living thing,
'Till all around is dark and foul,
And made even fit for thee, to prowl,
As fiends in kindred darkness, when at night,
They move, lit only by hell's sulph'ry light!
Seek'st thou the yellow ore, the spoil,
For which, thou'st borne uncounted toil,
Worthy, in better cause, to claim,
More than thou hast, or cravest, fame?
Then know thy labour needless—well
I knew, this furniture of hell,
Had been thy sole regard—and when
I drew to head my gallant men,

At the high city, 'neath its wave,
Our coffers found a ready grave;
'There with its yellow sands, our gold,
'Thro' distant nations shall be roll'd,
Glad poverty, destroy disease,
And lend the needy, life and ease,
But never shall delight thine eye
With its rank, baneful luxury."

XIX.

Then grew the Spaniard's brow more deep,
More deadly in its swarthy hue;
And passions, tho' they might not sleep,
Were silent to the view!
He would have hearken'd not the tale—
The spoil, so cherish'd, sought for, lost:—
And what to him would now avail,
The labour, blood and wealth it cost.
"Thou hast not dar'd to spoil the shrines
Where all thy gold and silver shines;
That wealth to idols consecrate—
Or—fly, ere yet it be too late,
And drag the river, gallant men,
And your reward shall meet ye then.
Thou savage, that hast cross'd my path,
Hast won, and now shalt feel my wrath;

It was thy lot, or good or ill,
To stay the progress of my will,
Protract my spoils, by idle war,
That could not win, and did but mar:
Now shalt thou feel, to cross the pow'r
Of triumph, in expectant hour,
Is but to win, or slow, or fast,
The vengeance that must come at last."

XX.

Bound on the flame—with look as calm
As conscious peace and quiet bliss,
The monarch's robe, the victor's palm,
Were, men and nations, toys to this.
And not a shrinking start, nor sign,
Of mutter'd anguish, hidden, deep,
Proclaims that he, of all his line,
Hath been the first, with pain, to weep.
As calmly as in peaceful bow'r,
As proudly as in robe of pow'r,
As haughtily as victor, now
Is Guatimozin's royal brow.
Beside him, on a kindred bed,
Of burning steel, with faggots fed,
His favourite turns, in agony
Upon his chief, his dying eye,

As if to ask, from idle pride,
What it had heretofore, denied!
The monarch read his servant's thought,
And while his high-born features caught,
A part of that enthusiast flame
Devotion feels, but cannot name,
Rebuk'd him with a smile, exclaiming—
His mounting-spirit, nothing taming,
Of its renewed and holy powers—
“Do I repose on flowers.”(9.)

XXI.

He died—what boots it how, to name,
But, with the Spaniard, rests the shame—
And if, as distant tales have said,
The martyr on his fiery bed,
Spoke forth a fearful prophecy,
Of fate, unto his enemy—
Then, do I ween, the curse was sooth,
Since after-time, hath prov'd its truth,
And age on age hath pass'd away,
And memory of the fatal fray,
Itself grown dark, and yet the bale
Of that deep prophecy and tale,
Hangs o'er the race, the name, the land,
Of that fierce, base and murderous band,

Nor, can their very nation break,
The fearful doom, and rise, and wake!

XXII.

The monarch died—his people fell
Beneath the fetters, link'd too well;
And Freedom, led by Ignorance,
Tho' seeking oft to burst the spell,
Ne'er found complete deliverance.
In Mexico the victors rest,
A hated, fear'd, unsought for guest,
On laurels, which, no longer white,
Shed purple blood-drops on the sight.
And silence reigns, where nought is peace—
Ambition sleeps not—men may cease
Their path of violence and blood,
But only want the fretful mood,
Of greedy avarice, or the thirst
Of that supremacy accurst,
Which perils honest pride and name,
And finds, at best, a doubtful fame.
Does Cortes slumber in his tent,
Now that the force of war is spent,
And freemen feel their chains no more,
Or feeling, dare not, well deplore,
The loss of birthright prized of yore—
As if thy pure and sacred glow.

Freedom, was meant for things so low.
Say, does he slumber—is his sleep
Quiet and grateful, as the deep
Refreshing slumbers of the brave,
Who spill their blood on land and wave,
Opposed to a despotic throne,
At Freedom's sacred call alone?

XXIII.

'Tis the mid hour of night—the lamp
Is burning on a table near,
Silence is o'er the Spanish camp,
A silence of mysterious fear.
And Cortes sleeps upon a bed—
Rough for a monarch, not for him,
Who oft-times found a peasant's shed,
Most meet for each athletic limb!
Or, on the roughest peak has lain
His giant bulk, and may again,
In far more quietude than now,
When victory twines around his brow,
The wreath of triumph and of blood,
So sternly sought thro' wild and flood.
No! by the dark and furrowy frown,
The lip compress'd, and mutter'd groan—
The writhing of that sinewy frame—
The sudden burst of well known name

From gnashing teeth, long taught to hide
The waking thought in garb of pride—
The tossing of the giant limb—
The aspect madden'd, startling, grim—
The close observer may behold,
What, seldom yet, the tongue hath told,
A story, from the lips apart,
The demon gnawing at the heart!

XXIV.

Fear hangs upon him like a spell—
A deep, oppressive, deadly weight.
He speaks—his tones are like the knell—
The penal tones of fate!
He starts—cold dew's on his brow,
His hair's erect—his eye-balls glare,
And strange, unmeaning accents flow
From his cold lips, to empty air!
A pray'r is on his lips—a pray'r,
'The first, perchance, heard ever there;
And audible, but half suppress'd
Accents of fear are in his breast—
He calls on Heav'n—on God—on all
On whom he once disdain'd to call!—
On all—whom, once, in victory's pride,
The impious wretch had dar'd deride,
And scorn'd the very book, his hands,

Had vow'd to bear in foreign lands,
The manual of the simple race,
Who, born not yet to light or grace,
Ill-fortune render'd to the sway,
Of savage, less refin'd than they.

XXV.

A spirit stands before him on the night,
That now, beneath its presence, grows to light—
Vapours surround it—darkness wraps its brow,
And makes it into shadowy hugeness grow—
While silence seems to stand, even visible,
As the dark soldier cowers beneath the spell,
And starts with shudd'ring horror to behold,
The Indian monarch now before him, cold—
And chilling up his blood, into a dense
And creeping mass, of agony intense—
He moves not—speaks not—ev'ry muscle's bound
Beneath the dead weight of the presence round
His eye-balls starting from their sockets, seem
The only living agents in that dream,
'Tho' not a portion of his form, but finds
Some atom, of that terrible sight, that winds
Thro' ev'ry pore and secret artery,
Making the curdling blood creep sluggishly—
God! what a groan of living death now breaks
From his broad chest, as slowly he awakes.

XXVI

He wakes, and in the dimness of that waking,
He deems the fearful dream and spectre, gone;
And laughs and trembles, ev'ry fibre shaking
While, from his giant form, the long breath break-
Relieves the almost suffocating spell, [ing,
That wrought upon him like a pang of hell!
And should the fearless champion be o'erthrown,
By idle fears, and shadowy things unknown?
He is again himself--and stands alone—
At least so deems he--till his sight more clear,
Reveals the horrible visitant more near—
Before him, standing in the garb he wore
Upon the bloody field, some hours before:
The light, the living light of life, was gone,
He stood, a form of life, but made of stone;
Moving no muscle, working no wand'ring look
Or glance, by ev'ry thing of life forsook--
A ghastly whiteness o'er his features spread,
Confirm'd the fearful aspect of the dead—
His sunken eye alone, had shook the soul,
And then so fixed, as if unmeant to roll—
So glaz'd, and glist'ning, as in that short time,
The worm had claim'd its own, and left its slime,
And foul'd the god-head's promise of high sway,
With putrid taint, and loathsomeness, and clay!

And, in that fearful moment of suspense,
Which lost, yet wrought to agony, each sense,
Upon the warrior's hand, like blistering flame,
'That drove and dried the blood, as there it came
The spectre's long and bony finger fell—
Remov'd not thence, and resting as a spell—
'That bound the victim in its coil of fear,
And froze and burnt, alternate and severe—
Transfix'd by horror, as at first he stood,
The warrior gaz'd, with thick and curdled blood,
Nor spoke, nor strove to speak, nor rais'd the hand.
So wot to fearful strife and fierce command,
But all impassive, near the Indian king,
He grows—a cold, unmeaning, living thing!

XXVII.

'The monarch-spectre spoke not—in his look,
There was a speech his stern lips never spoke,
Commanding, from the living warrior's frame,
As ductile 'neath its influence, and as tame,
As any worthless thing we may not name,
'That he should follow—and with silent tread,
He led the way, and swiftly onward sped,
Conqueror and victim—now no more the bold
And desperate soldier, but a form as cold,
And unresisting, in its task of pain,
As if all life had fled from ev'ry vein.

Night clos'd around them, as the city's walls
Grew into shade behind—their own footfalls
Only arousing Silence, for a pause,
In rapid dream, to spirit out the cause
Of interruption, in his dim abode,
Where sleep, fatigued, continual, throws the load
Of his o'erburthen'd frame, and, with his eyes,
Thousand in number, seeks for, and espies,
Among his visions, shadowy histories!
They strode among the slaughter'd men, who died,
The past day, both before and at their side,
There, pil'd in silent heaps, inanimate— [fate—
They fought like brutes, and won a wild-beast's
And as they strode, uncertainly, and still,
The moon uprose behind a grim-fac'd hill,
And look'd, with strange smile on the fearful sight,
That grew more horrible beneath her light—
Passions, not yet extinct, were still express'd
On lips, that tell the struggle of the breast,
The innate war with death, the foeman's strife,
The shrinking, shuddering, from the fatal knife,
And love of turbulent, but valued life—
And Cortes shrunk, that never shrunk before—
There lay a fav'rite captain in his gore,
His tongue lapt o'er his teeth, which in the last,
And fearful struggle, while his spirit past,

Had torn it half in twain, and there it lay,
In dust and blood, that shouted yesterday,
In all the full expressiveness and glow
Of hearts, that see but happiness below.
And many faces saw they, that he knew, [dew,
'Turn'd upwards to the heav'ns—glist'ning with
That fell like sweet drops of an April rain,
Or, taintless pearls upon the crimson plain,
As if there had been mercy for the slain!

XXVIII.

Why does the Spaniard start?—Before him lies
The boy—his fav'rite page—the sacrifice
To his ambition—for his life and fame,
And here, till now, forgotten—to his shame!
More pale and tender made by death, his cheek
Now wore a spirit's whiteness—while a streak
Fine and quite pure, scarce trickling from the wound
Proclaim'd the death, yet gentle, that he found.
No bruise, nor savage blow, from rugged knife,
Had taught the parting pangs of death, to life,
But tender-seeming, as himself, the blow
Was such, as might not well have come from foe.
And what does Cortes, at the sight
Of that devoted martyr boy—
Can aught of triumph give delight,
In presence of that deep alloy?

Such high devotedness and truth,
Might sure have won a better lot;
Such firmness in unshaken youth,
And courage, love, and all forgot?
And ever thus, while time shall be,
Ambition, blinded by the sun,
Throughout its flight, can never see,
Aught but the orb it looks upon!

He wrung his hands in anguish—clasp'd his brow,
And to his face, came back the swarthy glow,
A native there—revenge, and thirst of blood,
And all the fearful demon of his mood—
Yet, he knelt down, beside the delicate form,
That seem'd a lily, broken by the storm,
Along with stronger ruins; and with hand
Of fond enquiry, sought to gather much
Of hope and comfort from the passionate touch,
Where the nerves trembled, free from all command.
And for a moment thought he, life was there,
And laugh'd in his fierce joy—but cold despair,
Follow'd the first expression of delight,
As moons are swallow'd up, by clouds, at night!
The savage soldier wept, or seem'd to weep,
For once, with sudden, and impetuous sweep,
As if disdaining aught of sympathy,
He brush'd his rough hand o'er his wintry eye:
But yet, reluctant to depart, he stood

Awhile, beside the form, in musing mood,
Then hastily displacing the steel band
That held the boy's cap, underneath his hand,
He tore the cap aside—long, streaming hair,
Reveal'd, too well, the dead girl sleeping there.
In peace, at last—in peace, too lately known,
And only found, and felt, when ever gone.

XXIX.

He hastily strode on—as if he sought
To lose the lingering traces of that thought,
Which, like the ocean, settling from a storm,
Hath still a fearful wildness on its form!
They reach'd a plain—before them, rose on high,
Dark Acapulco(10) frowning to the sky,
Like mounting battlements, by demons set,
To reach the glorious heaven, they grieve for yet.
But where is he, that chill and fearful guide?
No longer moves he by the Spaniard's side,
And, all alone upon the bloody plain,
Girt by the gloomy spirits of the slain,
Who wake the night winds from their ocean lair
To waft their shrieks of agony or fear—
He stands alone—when past that spirit shade,
Nor rous'd a breath of air, nor shook a blade,
Or drop of dew from off the bended grass,
So silent, and so sudden did he pass!

And colder grew the spirit, in the breast
Of that fierce warrior, struggling, but repress—
And fate-led, back his footsteps he retrac'd,
To that broad plain, with purple laurels grac'd,
And, from among the dead, with gentle arm,
As if it trembled to displace one charm,
Of fearful, but sweet beauty given by death,
Which seem'd to sleep upon her lips like breath,
Nor froze the silk of one wind-shaken curl—
He rais'd the lifeless form of that young girl,
And, with strange care, he bore her from the spot,
So mark'd by death, with indiscriminate blot;
And laid her down upon the swardy bed,
Supporting on his arm, her drooping head,
While with a strange, unconsciousness of care,
His fingers wander'd idly in her hair,
As they had long been taught to wander there.
Thus, at the morn, by anxious followers, found
The savage chief, repos'd upon the ground—
Nor smil'd nor spoke—but musingly, he bade,
By sign, that they should straight remove the maid,
From off the fatal field—nor sigh'd to part,
With her, that hung, like life-blood, round his heart.

XXX.

And knew he now, in that sad hour,
When death had prov'd his fearful pow'r,

And Love, that conquers every foe,
Had sunk beneath his fatal blow,
How much the heart had been his own,
Won only, when forever gone.
A boyish joust in courtly Spain—
A time he would not see again,
Tho' pleasure then absorb'd all pain—
He felt the force of those dark eyes,
And, for the lover soon espies,
He fill'd his own with mute replies.
What boots it now, to tell the tale,
Of hapless love, and hopeless wail—
To chide the beggar Fortune, now,
That scorn'd the dream, and broke the vow;
Time, while it robs away each hope,
Can never, well with memory cope;
And love that scorns oblivion yet,
Can never, where it sigh'd, forget.
Immur'd in cold, conventual walls,
The tear of hidden maiden falls;
And not the regimen of pray'r,
Nor all the deep seclusion there—
And not the penance, creed, or vow,
Forc'd on a heart that could but bow,
And perish 'neath the unerring blow,
Could thrust aside the pleasant pain,
That neither heart shall know again!

XXXI.

Years had pass'd by, and he, she lov'd
By absence, and by time reprov'd,
For men forget, where women sigh,
And rove, when fruiter spirits die—
By high, adventure wrapt, and won,
Upon the distant seas had gone—
And so had fill'd the stirring time,
With scenes, perchance, of blood and crime,
That, thought of her he left behind,
Not often stole upon his mind.
No pleasant changes in her lot,
Had haply made him thus forgot—
Alas! already, much too dear,
His name was ever in her ear,
For he had dwelt in fields of fight,
And kept his fame so oft in sight,
That the faint flame of early days,
Had burst into a mighty blaze—
And love, with newer powers allied,
Beheld the hero's form with pride.
How could that innocent girl refrain,
From love of him, whom, all of Spain,
Beheld the first among the great—
She lov'd, admir'd, and bow'd to fate!

XXXII.

One hapless hour—deem'd happy then,
She found unbarr'd, her prison-grate;
'The keeper of that fearful den,
Withdrawn—she did not hesitate!
A moment gave her freedom—gave,
To be the rest of life, a slave;
For, what is slavery, but to be
Dependant for the spirit's life,
Upon the will of those not free!

She sought him out in fearful strife—
A page's garb, her pass became,
And, with a ready change of name,
Suspected not, she won his ear,
His heart—if heart could still be, where
Sat Pride, Ambition, Avarice—
To these, must love be sacrifice!
It was her fate, and so she bow'd,
And mingled with the menial crowd;
But ever, in the fearful hour,
When trumpets sound, and war-clouds low'r.
However fierce did war betide,
That ready page was by his side;
And seal'd, without reproach, the vow,
Kept to the last, and cancel'd now!

XXXIII.

She died, a martyr to the love,
Descended from, return'd above;
Untainted in her purer form,
That, like the moonbeam in the storm,
Tho' swallow'd up, by clouds of ill,
Was a rich, precious moonbeam still!

Oh, never more
Shall blight of sorrow fall upon that heart—
Nor, tear thro' that repressed eye-lid start,
Nor heart's affection from its birth-place part—

For all is o'er
Of trial and long suffering, and the pain, [brain,
'That, worse than all, hangs on the o'erburthen'd
'Too much dependant on the spirit's choice,
To utter forth a voice!

A voice of reason, still to love, a foe,
Too sternly dashing out, with sights of wo,
And tones of truth,
The picture lines of youth!

She died for him she loved—her greatest pride,
'That, as for him she liv'd, for him she died!

Make her young grave,
Sweet fancies, where the pleasant branches lave,
Their drooping tassels in some murmuring wave.
And ye, incredulous! believe not, faith,

Thus warmly kept through life, and prov'd in death
Avail'd not, nor was valu'd by the breast,

Whose spirit thus it bless'd—

No!—he she perish'd for—tho' high-nurst fame
Perch'd with an eaglet's pinion on his name—

And sunny Spain

Valued his worth, and with his honours gave,
Neglect and shame,(11)

Reward of all, who labour for the blind—

His warped mind

Sigh'd for the Indian valley, where the maid

His boyhood lov'd, was laid—

And, tho' his pride of heart allow'd no trace,
Of his soul's sorrow, to o'ercloud his face,

He never smil'd again!

CAIN.

A SCRIPTURE POEM.

———"What is strength, without a double share
Of wisdom? vast, unwieldy, burdensome,
Proudly secure, yet liable to fall,
By weakest subtleties,"

SAMSON AGONISTES.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The following is the projected introduction to a Poem of some length, upon the subject of Cain. Its continuation depends entirely upon the reception, which the present specimen, may meet with from the public. The part here given, will form the first book.

CAIN.

SPIRIT, that to the mighty of old time—
When men were giants, little less than Gods,
And sole omnipotent, to earth's known end,
Whether in arms, or in the sciences;
That taught the knowledge of the vast unseen,
And pruned the tree of thought, too free,
Luxuriant, in its first-born, wild excess—
Didst lend the power, and living energy,
That made them, spite of rough discourtesy,
And rude adventure of the boorish time,
Give themselves to the spirit of true thought,
And in the mountains, or the bladed fields,
Or in the shadow of the desert, made,
Remote from the intrusion of the world,
A home for higher converse—I implore, ✕
Celestial, thy proud aid and confidence,
That to my theme so lofty, I impart
A something of the tone that should belong
To song adventurous:—after him, who sang—

Him, whose dim eyes, bent innerward, beheld
The God that was within him, blind beside—
I may not tread unaided, nor attempt
The golden tenor of that holy harp,
That spake in the proud voice of prophecy,
And mingled with the mandate of the Lord,
Unearthly melodies, that gave the waste
Perceiving sense, and won the midnight ear
Of silence down, upon th' attentive world.
Spirit, the parent of secur'd success,
Be with me now, and on my argument,
Simple, from thee majestic, be bestow'd
The triumph thou didst shed on it of old!

The earth was now a garden—summer had grain
The fields with yellow riches, and the trees,
Bent with their redden'd off'rings, to the ground.
A smile was over all—the sky was fill'd
With a fair countenance, and on the earth,
A pleasant shade was cast, and the sweet beam
Of the young morning had embrac'd it all,
Till it grew palpable to touch and taste,
And gloried in its freshness and its calm.
Eden, with all its wealth, not all denied
To the lone exiles, who had pitch'd their tents,
With sorrowful hearts, not far remote the spot
They had so blindly forfeited and lost—
Repenting all too late, of the deep crime

That, to succeeding ages must enure
In punishment, without the pleasant sin,
Which brought them down, the penalty, not theirs,
Save in endurance.--Eden, the lost, still rose,
While all was turbulent passion in their hearts,
Remorse and sobbing grief, deep, but not loud,
And late Repentance, sorrowing o'er the past,
In a sweet calm--while Night, with sable plume,
Frown'd black upon the wanderers, and spread
His wings between them, and the sweet heart-home,
Fair birthright, they had bargain'd off, for tears--
As if to shut them from the long, last look,
That Innocence would cast upon its home,
Endear'd by all that youth can conjure up,
Yet not surpassing what indulgent heav'n,
Had, from the boundless measure of its wealth,
Portion'd, in kindness, to the first born man!
Sweet earth! what other spot of earth shall be
Like that of childhood? where it first grew up,
And spoke its first entrancing melodies,
And 'plain'd as gently as the delicate leaf,
Ruffled by rude October. Where its sports
Were first familiar with the scene of play,
Its very trees remember'd, and its leaves,
Familiar as cool garments, loosely thrown
Between it and the ever-piercing sun--
Poor tokens, which the heart may never bear

Along with it—that in its lonely hours,
When all the past, like night-winds, slowly come—
Back to the recollection and the sight,
It has no tangible token, it may touch,
And feel its sympathy rejoin'd by tone
Of some thing kindred—as a wak'ning string,
Of sweet harp-voicing, brings the madman home
To reason, and fair quietness, and peace.

And they have bade adieu—a long adieu—
And who can bid adieu, to all its joys,
Its home of childhood, and the cottage floor,
And the broad tree, that overhung with shade,
And canopied the bank, whereon the breeze,
Won by fresh odours of the innocent wild,
Came down and rested—the sweet rude repast,
And fresh ripe fruits, spread out unconsciously,
Pluck'd from the tree o'erhead, and simply plac'd
Before the eye, creating appetite,
Uncharged by dainty preference, nor taught,
By coarse satiety, to seek for aught,
New, as provocative, but simply rude,
In no profusion, spread before the eye,
But, by the providential care of God,
Still un-decreasing, howsoe'er consumed.
Oh! are all these forgotten—can they lose
These blessings of their birthplace, and the joys
Of that superior clime, so near the home,

And dwelling place of peace, and joy, and Heav'n—
Lose all the promise of the morn—the dream,
Shed by the poppied tree, whose leaves bestowed
The couch, whereon, at noontide sultriness,
From the sharp, brazen arrows of the sun,
'They slumber'd thro' the hour—can they forget,
'The all, that Age remembers of its youth,
Yet weep not? Did they weep—the weary, lost,
The *two* upon the desert, fearing much,
That in his uttermost extent of wrath,
He, they had so offended, had withdrawn
The hand of his protection, and no more
Look'd on them as his children, nor bestow'd
The presence they had set at nought, but gave
Their fortunes to themselves, and they alone,
Upon a desert—with no succour near—
Eden shut out from sight, and Night with brow,
Cloud-mantled, and with many storms enwrapt,
Between them, and their lately-lost abode—
Before them, an impenetrable vast,
Unknown, and undiscover'd, curs'd and dead,
And fruitful only, from the dropping sweat
Of brows, accusom'd to a canopy
Of pleasant breezes, unfatiguing light,
Fair colours, not to dazzle, but delight,
And nothing ruder than a cherub's wing,
To fan the sunset tangles of the hair,

Now doom'd to droop with moisture, wrought by to
From hard endurance, bitter felt fatigue,
As all unknown—deep and excessive heat,
Chilling, and wintry breezes, and the wind,
That lifts the desert's sands, and kills the waste.
A fiery ocean, tempest-wing'd and dread.

Oh! did they weep? Look on them, as they bend
The woman, with her hand above her eye,
And outstretch'd neck, and arm around the tall.
And manly form beside her. He, with hands,
Clasp'd mournful on his breast, yet standing firm,
And tho' with earnest look, yet seeming not
O'er-anxious to discern the fading home,
That now shut dim and darkly in the East,
Seemed but a golden strip, lit by the sword
Of winged cherubim, put there to guard,
The dwelling, which their hearts still occupied.

She rests upon him, and the tears come forth,
At last to her relief—the redden'd eyes
Suffus'd, he clasps her to his breast, and she,
Reprov'd, by his look of tenderness,
Lifts the long hair, that on her shoulder hangs,
And wipes them into redness, and affects
A mournful smile, still sadder than her tears—
Then, in a measur'd note of loneliness,
She spoke her sorrows, in his musing ear.

Afflicted, but not wholly desolate,
Adam, one wealth we bore from Paradise;
Not stolen, but afforded to our lot,
Enough to keep in us the love of life,
In all privation—pleasant too, and well
Considered, to become the substitute,
For much of the vast happiness, we've lost!
Hast thou regarded this, or, art thou fix'd,
Determin'd that thy sorrows shall have way,
To keep thee in the practices of grief,
That thou may'st soon receive the benefit,
Awarded us in that dark prophecy,
Which spoke of death, and silence, and the grave—
Privation from all feeling, happiness,
Or anguish, or admixture of them both;
Annihilation for a season, still,
Worse than whole ages of confirmed pain.
Wilt thou not share with me this happiness?—
Then wean thee from thy earnestness of grief,
And kindle up the altar left to us,
Of sacred friendship, and domestic love!
Dost thou not find thy every sense acute,
More comprehensive now? Is not thy fear
Extenuate—thy hope, of what is yet
Unknown in nature, sharper than before—
And hast thou not a feeling less at large,
Directed to one point, and therefore strong;

Unwandering to the many, dear delights,
Of our own lost inheritance in heav'n.

To which, the man, then answering, thus replied
Oh! gracious kindness of the mighty power,
That we have so offended, thus to give,
His sanction to the feeling, we have brought
A native flow'r of Eden, thus away—
Domestic Love! I feel it in my heart,
I gather it from thy rich accent, Eve,
'Tis strong in every object that I see—
It lives in every feeling of my frame—
'Tis of our life, a vital principle,
A part of our existence, fairest part!
The all of Eden, that we dare to claim—
Yet sweet, as any flower in Eden nurst,
Or on the borders of that sacred wave,
Where *He* walk'd forth, at morning, to behold
That all in his creation, still was good.
Alas! that he should come, and we should fear
His holy presence, Eve! alas! alas!
Yet has his mercy bless'd us, tho' denied
The home, where first he planted us, with care;
And the pure feeling of affection glows
Warm in my heart, and bids me not despond,
Since it assures us, he beholds us still;
And our first sin, our only sin, tho' deep,
Has made us not the outcasts from his care,

We are from his abode of blessedness—
Unworthy longer to remain, or dwell
In place so holy, yet not all unfit
For his high charge and tender nourishment.
The Earth, that he has given us, to till,
And occupy at last, is not unkind—
For, while stern Justice spoke the bitter curse,
That made it barren in its stubbornness,
Mercy shed many tears, and soften'd it!
To bear with sorrow, is to conquer it,
And patiently, tho' sadly, on the morn,
I will begin my duty, and implore
Our gracious Father—so we call him still,
Albeit, unworthy children, earth to bless,
By making it productive to my hand—
Meanwhile, as Day no longer holds his lamp,
And grief, and many tears have worn thee out,
This turfy bed, is soft, and the green leaves,
Which I will strew upon it, will avail
To make a couch, not all unmeet for us,
To our condition fit, not as it was,
Nor suited then to us, as we were then,
Yet more than just to our condition now.

Thus saying, from the pleasant hill-side, he
Gather'd enough of bushes, to spread forth
The humble, not uncomfortable couch
Of the discarded children—and above.

Some larger leaves upon a bough he put,
To shelter from the dews, that the first time,
The heavenly people wept for their sad lot—
Then on it, did he throw his manly frame,
And she beside him came, and laid her head
Upon his bosom—God who all beheld,
Sent down his messenger of sleep, who spread
His mantle gently o'er them, and watch'd,
Thro' the long night above them, till the morn.

* * * * *

A season, told in flow'rs, had pass'd away,
And the high spirit, once again invok'd,
Reveal'd the picture of the infant time,
Before my rapt sense, wondering to perceive,
The circumstance, and beauty of its change.
I stood upon a pleasant spot of earth,
Mark'd, as before, with many incidents,
Strong feature, and development of point,
To fix my recollection, as the same,
Denoted as the outcast's exile place;
Hard by, the walls of adamantine fire,
That blaz'd around their dwelling place, so late—
Lost Eden, to their children lost, thro' them,
'Till *He* restore them by his own Son's grace!

But else, that spot of exile, were unknown—
So chang'd in that short season to my view,
Where barrenness had cursed it, and the blight

Of an unnatural parent, had foredoom'd
Sterile defiance to the shaft or hand—
Was now, thro' man's good resolution, brought
Obedient, and return'd him sustenance,
Rich fruits, and much abundance. It was now,
Near ev'ning—and the fierce light of the sun,
Was mellow'd into softness, as he sunk
In Eden's bosom--the rich, tinctur'd clouds,
Like cherubims, in garments finely wrought,
Of many colours, and fair seeming hues,
Came after, in attendance. All the sky
Was gay, with the profusion of fair forms;
Some large, and proud of excellence, supreme,
Above their fellows, in attendance, close,
From their great eminence—while some afar,
In more reserved seeming, pressing on,
Modest, yet confident, and winning too,
Albeit, not quite so richly drest, nor full,
In such proportion of great size or shape,
Some delicate and faintly utter'd hues.
All the Eastern sky, (save here and there,
A speck of purple, left as for a gift
Of fond memorial of the by-gone hours)
Seem'd dark and gloomy, as it mourn'd to lose
Its vigorous companion, and first spouse,
Now won to the embraces of the west!
The Earth had grown into a deeper shade.

And pale specks 'gan to steal into the sky
Cautious, and dreading the absorbing sun—
When lo! the man—our father—he, it was,
Returning to his homely dwelling place,
On yonder green slope, where the red light hangs,
As if reluctant to depart, tho' call'd,
Impatient, by the still up-glancing Day.
Some fruits were in his hand—some pleasant fruits—
Sweeter, because the sultry day had wrought
The sweat from his broad forehead, as he toil'd
In that still petulant, and resisting soil!
Yet were there smiles upon his sunburnt brow
That grew from the cheer'd spirit, that within,
Even as the sun went down, had offer'd up
His ev'ning pray'r—accepted—for the form
Of God, stood over 'gainst a pillar'd cloud,
And, with a lightning glance, shot out from thence,
Smil'd on him approbation, mix'd with rule—
Thus mercy tempers Justice—and, yet more,
'To warm the wakeful hope, that leapt within
'The heart of that lone man, an angel stood,
Beside him, as he left his place of toil,
On his way home, and gave him of new fruits,
Unknown to him before, and pleasant herbs,
And taught him, of their use and appliance,
Culture, and mode of preparation, all,
Simply and sweetly, by which Adam knew,

The God he had offended was *his* God—
And he, not all unworthy to receive
His care, or favour, doubted of, before,
By conscious weakness—so that Adam came,
To his low cottage, on that swardy waste,
And the deep gloom of his embrowned cheek,
Like a sad sky of cloud, impending rain,
Lit up by sudden sunshine, bursting through,
Was mix'd with tenderness and happy smiles.
He stood by his low cot, and she was there,
The one of his affections—doom'd to share
Their punishment, and with a pleasant look
Of calm, she met him from his labour come;
Rejoicing. In her arms, she gently bore
A pair of chubby infants, hale and flush
Of health, who lay and nestled at her breast,
Inhaling thence, their nourishment and life.
Brown labour had infused into her frame,
A hardiness that mingled in with much
Of her first sweetness of aspect, not lost,
In her sad downfal; and a winning grace
Shone in the calm and patience of her look—
Happy, that from their cottage, discontent,
Driven out, by sweet reliance upon God,
Had fled the little valley where they dwelt!

* * * * *

The boys, were boys no longer. They had grown,

In that beneficent clime, that could not be
Else than Hygeian, bounding close upon
The lost abode of purity and bliss,
Up into fair proportion, and much grace—
Vigour Herculean, and a pleasant ease
Of limb and outward seeming, not unmeet
To glad the eye, and satisfy the nice,
And close observances of curious taste.
Manliness stood, a native, on the brow
Of him, the first born. In his dark eye shone
Much character—stern fixedness and pride—
A restlessness of that, which bound him down,
As other men, in seeming ignorance,
Yet wiser than the rest of earth beside.

He lov'd not, that his toil should only win
The bread of life; and marvel'd that his thought,
So searching, and far wandering, should return
Without discovery. He look'd beyond
His own horizon, bounded to a span,
And long'd for other regions, unknown lands,
Deeming imprisonment, the close confine,
Of his first birth-place. Thus, with thought like this
And dreams, that won him from himself, away,
What wonder he should leave the compass'd field,
Appointed to his labours. Thus, at eve,
As from the place of toil, returning home,
He spoke at last, with weary heart and sad,

To his old father, in respectful word,
Link'd with a rugged earnestness, that gave
Assurance of determination, made
In cool reflection, therefore worthy note!

I know not well, my father, if my thought,
Be wrong in this, but that it is my thought,
Unforced, and of his own accord, from God,
I may not question. I was never made
To grovel in the earth, and dig for food,
With heart so wrought like mine, that ever springs
Upward to heav'n, and gathering from its flight,
A newer vigour, 'till it onward soars,
From star to star, and thro' each bright abode,
Imagined in rich dreams, that seldom fly,
Discovers its true birth place. It is mine,
I feel it in my soul, that it is mine—
Else, why this anxiousness to soar above
This dull dim earth, this barren dwelling place,
Accursed, even by our toil, accurs'd—
And more than curs'd by him who gave it us,
Accursed be it then, as 'tis accurs'd.

But Adam, all impatient, stay'd his speech,
With interruption brief—

Accursed not—

Earth! be thou blessed, even with our tears,
And labour. Hear not, Oh God, this boy—
Spare him, for ignorant and vain, his pray'r

Is wrung from childish spirit, that is clipt
In its observance, and beyond the time,
Sees not thy glorious Providence and will!
Kneel, impious boy, kneel Abel—kneel with me,
And let thy humble pray'r undo thy rash,
And ill-advised temper; that thou may'st
Stand before Heaven, nor feel thy idle curse,
Come multiplied, untemper'd on thy head,
'That call'd it down, on that which gives us life,
But for our labour, which improves the good,
By teaching us its value.

I will kneel,
My father with you now, return'd the boy,
And offer up my pray'r for every good,
It may be, that you would be thankful for:
And chiefly for the blessing, which has made,
Spite of your destiny—that rugged fate,
Which I am free to say, I covet not,
So well content. I would it were my lot,
To own a spirit, so much like to thine,
That, whatsoe'er its own adventure, wrong,
And wantonly-enforced suffering,
I might put down my head, and in the dust,
Lift the fine ashes from our clay-built hearth,
And wrap me in a cloud of it, and cry
For other punishment; and smile and pray,
To find the pray'r accepted, and new pain
Sent down to gratify the humble heart!—

But for a wrong which I have never done,
I may not seek forgiveness. I have stood
Upon yon mountain, by the ev'ning light,
Where thou art now to offer sacrifice,
And if I pray'd, I pray'd not for myself,
For I had nought to pray for. But I pray'd,
That *He*, the almighty, powerful, severe,
Inflexible in judgment, should not hold
The cloudy front of his full countenance,
Upon you and my mother, and the young boy
That stands beside you, with enclasped hands,
And eye of upturn'd tenderness, and calm—
I pray'd that you might feel, as now you feel,
Contented with your lot, and not like me,
Be doom'd to inborn conflict with the soul,
Too proud to own allegiance, or bow down
For privilege to labour and to sweat,
For bread, whose sweetest sustenance is—tears;
And meat of lambs, that cry with plaintive tone,
More sad and tender than your saddest pray'r,
When you do rob them from the piteous dam,
Whose bleatings fill the tent, e'en while the feast,
At her poor heart's expence, is going on.
What I have pray'd for then, I'll pray for now—
Your happiness, my mother's, brother's, mine,
Whate'er that happiness may be. 'Tis well
That we should thus, conciliate the power,

Since 'tis the pow'r alone that bids us pray,
To whom we can oppose, nor force nor guile,
Nor arbitration strong—but all submit,
In quietude and meekness—mercy comes
Alone from power, my father bids me say—
We ask no mercy, where we see no power,
And own no crime, where punishment is none,
Or else defiance strong, we offer up,
In token of our hardihood of heart,
And utter shamelessness and scorn—kneel down
Abel, my brother, we will kneel and pray.

Thus saying, knelt he, by his brother's side,
And Adam bow'd his head—awhile they pray'd
Aloud. Adam, unto his first-born, at the close,
'Thus, his fond thought deliver'd.

Cain, my son,
The air is tainted thou abidest in—
Nor is that purer, that encircles us,
And thus we need the incense, to remove
And purify our evil dwelling-place.
Bad spirits are about us, day and night,
Watching our guardlessness, and still alert
In momentary absence, to entrap,
And rob us of our future heritage—
Therefore the name of God should be a spell,
Borne with us in our solitude—his word .
A sacred garment, wrapt about,

Our else unguarded loins; and gentle thoughts,
And purity and faith should fill our hearts,
To fit us for the company of God,
And the pure angels, that we sometimes meet,
Beside us, in the forest—such as he
That sent thy mother roots, by Abel's hand,
When she was sick, which wrought her health again.
Forbear thy thoughts, my son—thy evil thoughts,
For pride is evil, and the proud in heart,
Bow down in shame, unless they guard themselves.
Let us upon our way—the winds of eve,
That wait upon, and usher in the night,
Are bringing us the perfume of the flow'rs,
That grow in Eden—and the song of birds—
Ye hear my boys, that lonely one, that seems
To sing apart, from all the merry ones—
Now, do ye hear the melancholy strain?
O! ever thus, that gentle-toned, sad bird,
Would, sound at night, the warning note, that shut
The delicate young flow'rs, and warn'd us two,
Thy mother and myself, to seek the shade
Of our o'er-canopied, secluded bow'r.
I cannot now, so far forget my wont—
Tho' long, since it was taught to meet my ear,
And tell me of my duties—but even now,
With that sweet song, I shut the day-light out,
And woo the cheering sleep, and dream of Eden.



ASHLEY RIVER.

———"The Surge
Heaves, darkly boiling from below—
To him, there's music in its flow,
For there he listens, and he stands,
With fixed eye, and clasped hands."

J. W. SIMMONS

ADVERTISEMENT.

I have, in the following Poem, rather indulged in my own mental and personal associations, than in any effort to give a local picture. Many passages, however, which might have had that effect, have been, for obvious reasons, expunged for the present. At some future day they may be restored.

ASHLEY RIVER.

I.

Flatter me not, with visions like to these—
Too well, my friend, you know the pow'r to please,
The winning accent, and the friendly tone,
Make me all yours, when I am scarce my own!
And, when desponding—trampled by some new
And stern affliction; staring on my view—
When weary even with life, this narrow life,
Where all is bitterness, and much is strife,
I fain would pause, nor battle for my breath,
But seek, and find, some peace, at last, in death—
You come with friendly smile, and gaily dress,
Some newer phantom up, of happiness;
Paint fairy prospects, green, and flush'd with light;
And hide the frost and winter from my sight;
Arouse the dying spark of hope, anew,
And dress the night, with moonlight and with dew!
You win me back to struggle, and to gain
Some newer agony, to crush my brain;

Some blight unlook'd for, and, the more severe,
As you have made me dream, that none was near.

II.

How little do *they* know—the crowd, the throng,
The curse, and madness, that abides with song!
That fatal destiny, which bids us turn,
To where, the altars of the Muses, burn;
Commands us, light our torches, at a flame,
From which, nor warmth, nor lustre can we claim,
And, when we dream, our fires are kindled quite,
Obscures the blaze, and tramples it from sight!
And thou, even thou, who best can'st comprehend
The Poet's nature, as thou art his friend—
Thou, who hast taught me, that, not all unknown,
My song has been, though, known to thee, alone,
Even thou, art all unmeet to learn the pain,
When the heart watches o'er the slumbering brain,
Beholds the mad, unquiet of that hour,
When Fancy's spectres own redoubled pow'r,
And rouses up her train of shadowy forms,
To shake the sleep of agony, with storms,
Or, keep the abject Muse awake, and weep,
When all the world is happy, and asleep!
What hopes are his, who dare explore the lyre—
What smoky clouds assail his wayward fire—
What dreams incite, of glory, or of gain,

To fly, at last, and leave him but to pain?
Now taught by Friendship, and now won by praise,
The laurel swells before his falcon gaze—
Glory invites him, with enticing eye,
And blue-vein'd charms, to tread her starry sky—
Fame seeks his couch by night, and weaves the dear
Undoubted sentence, of the future year,
And thro' the mists of coming time, reveals
The bay-crown'd statue, till his vision reels,
And he awakes with raptures all his own,
To find his dream, a dream—his statue, gone!

III.

Yet, must I sing—the destiny which gave,
The pow'r of song, and made me all its slave,
Still drives me on, pursuing and pursued,
Alternate won, the wooer and the wooed.
Doom'd me to find in every change or shade,
Some fearful Tyrant that must be obey'd—
Bade me but live on sunshine, yet on high,
Hung with a pitchy mantle, all the sky—
And fill'd, with strange influences, the cloud,
And wrapt in dust, and gloom, and heat, the crowd—
And when my heart was delicate, and frail,
Ordain'd, it should depart before the gale,
Unfitted all, to combat with the breeze,
Yet doom'd to struggle with the rebel seas—

Sent it abroad, all rudderless, to strain,
For the far port, it may not reach again!
Wrought by that fatal doom, from whence, the dow'r,
Of song first came, a wild, and fearful pow'r,
The unrelenting toil is still my own,
To tread the weary wilderness, alone—
To shrink, with sensitive tenderness, from life,
And find in man, the harbinger of strife;
Feel every breath, as fatal to the bloom,
Of that rich flow'r, we leave upon our tomb,
And dread with strange inquietude and bile,
The bad man's sneer, the cold man's scorn or smile.
Yet will I sing—and tho' with song, there be,
But little pride, and far less sympathy--
'Tho' Fame, for which the Minstrel's heart beats
If seen at all, is only seen to fly-- [high,
And jealousy, and bitter malice, stand
Ready to crush, with rais'd, united hand,
And song be one dark struggle to attain,
The shallow meed, that life can seldom gain—
Yet will I sing—and tho' the day be far,
When mine, shall be the glory of a star,
Still to beam on in splendour, to the last,
When thou, and I, my friend, and all are past—
'Tis a proud destiny, that dares to die,
For the far gloom of Immortality!

IV.

Lo! from the horizon's verge, declining day,
Casts his red shadow o'er the rippling bay;
On high, the dark wave leaps, ere light be gone,
To hail one smile from the departing sun;
While in the dark blue vault, the fleecy rack,
Of thronging clouds, attending on his track,
Form, in a gorgeous canopy of light,
Each hue that's lovely, and each ray that's bright!
Blandishing ministers, more sweetly pure,
As we, their lustre better can endure,
Than him, their monarch—whence alone, they claim
Their heav'n of hue, and more than world of flame—
Still to the last, though lost to mortal eyes,
He leaves behind, his garniture of dyes;
And the stars glow, and the pale moon appears
In the blue vault, and all his light, is theirs.

V.

Here, as the day declines, the lonely heart,
May sigh to lose its being's richest part—
Those glories of the aerial world, which seem
To wild-eyed Fancy, Heav'n's own op'ning gleam;
While, from the silvery vestment of the sky,
Eternal splendours burst upon the eye,
Revealing, shaded by a mystic veil,

The wonders, dreamt of, in enthusiast's tale—
Those transient glimmerings, where, devotion sees
The long-lost garden, and the living trees—
Rich bow'rs, whose maidens, wooing to their arms,
Soft as their homes, eternal as their charms,
Sing those enticing airs, which, like the tree,
That blooms forever, in fair Araby, [boughs,
Tempt the young Pilgrim, slumbering 'neath its
To leave his duties, and forget his vows;
Discard the affections of his native shore,
And deem his journey done, his labours, o'er.

VI.

Yes—wrapt in mists of darkness, which pervade
Even Fancy's own domain of light and shade,
Even now, these glories vanish from the sky,
And leave the soul of Solitude, to sigh!
Sigh, that even these, the last on earth to cheer,
So brightly dark, so languishingly clear—
Whose mellow'd tints, disposed in tasteful pride,
The deep and light, with equal pow'r, divide;
So well arranged to soothe the soul of grief,
And lend it sympathy, if not relief,
Should thus so soon depart, and leave no trace
Of morning glory, or of ev'ning grace.
Beautiful Ashley! when I first essay'd,
The lyre's rude song, as on thy banks, I stray'd,

How came young Hope, with gentle smiles supplied,
To bless my dreams, and wander by my side!
How, o'er the past, did playful Memory run,
And sweet the joys, from recollection, won!
The swift ascent to manhood's warmer glow,
That youth, repining, ever deems too slow—
The flow'rs that deck'd the wayside, as I came,
And, as a first discoverer, dar'd to name—
The kindred heart, that smil'd, when others frown'd,
And she, the loveliest of the circle round,
Whose sudden glance, like stars of shooting flame,
Brought melancholy gladness, where they came—
These, when the ascent was gain'd, young Memory
brought,
As fadeless records, to the book of thought—
To these, gay Hope, a winged wanderer, threw
A future world—more bright—but not so true!

VII.

Here on these banks, my roving thought portrays,
Anew, the scenes of long-forgotten days;
Not those, forsooth, wherein I bore a part,
What's dear to Fancy's foreign to the heart—
But where my young Imagination roves,
To those glad walks and brave and arching groves,
Where Nature, wild, and stag-eyed, as at first,
Upon the tenant of the forest burst;

Reveal'd the shady tract, and fertile lawn,
Where kept the hill-fox, or reposed the fawn—
Taught him the neighbouring forest-depths to scan
Its wildest labyrinth and maziest plan,
Untrod by any lord, save him, who gave
Freedom to all, nor made the brute his slave;
Nor slew with wanton hand—nor idly bent,
His springy yew in careless lavishment,
But moderate still in want, that slew no prey,
Save, what that want, instructed him to slay!
There, where the savage dwelt in native pride,
And scorn'd the world, or knew no world beside
The wild and desert loneliness of place,
At once the grave, and dwelling of his race,
In simple, rude, ungraciousness of life,
Yet full of hospitality and strife;
Ready to war, as ready to obey,
The dictate of the prophet and his sway—
Slave to the passion, which, himself, he made,
And wrought the 'Tyranny, himself obey'd—
Practis'd to draw the bow, and spring at dawn
To meet the grey-eyed Day upon the lawn,
Begin his journey, ere the blush of day,
Nor, for the gloom of ev'ning's shade, delay—
Assiduous to explore, intent to view,
The march of earth, and prove its courses true,
From the grey bark, depict his journey's track,

Nor find a need to pause or turn him back—
Careless of danger, ready to endure,
Rich in the employ, which keeps him ever poor,
Too much in love with Heav'n's fresh airs, to creep
Beneath a cell, when the broad tempests sweep
Their mighty wings across the wide expanse,
At once their own, and mind's inheritance—
Taught from his cradle, bravely to resign
The life, which pain forbids him to repine;
Bound to the stake, to emulate his sire,
Triumph thro' life, and triumphing, expire:
With a proud song of vengeance satisfied,
Deem his life nobly spent, who bravely died.

VIII.

The day is past—the glories of their prime,
The morning freshness of the infant time,
Is gone with the proud Savage, and no trace
Remains of forest shade and simple race.
How dark the destiny, that swept away,
Men wild, but gentle, innocent as they,
'Till not the slightest trophy do we claim,
But that, which tells their fortune, in our shame.
And this broad stream, this Poet-stream, no more
Rolls back their tones of vigor to the shore,
Where, by the hamlet side, the Indian maid,
At ev'ning stood beneath the old tree's shade.

Surveying her boy-lover, as in view,
 He urged the arrowy prow of his canoe,
 Across the leaping waters, that between,
 His heart and idol, rear'd their living green.
 How dark to Fancy seems the picture left
 To him, of the old solitude bereft—
 The silent, solemn sweetness of the waste,
 With the rude birch canoe upon its breast,
 And the slant sunbeam gilding all the way,
 Mark'd by his prow upon the parting spray,
 That, now in jagged, dull confusion falls,
 On dens of brick, and miserable walls,
 Dimming with gloomy shadows the pure stream,
 That once was rich and redolent with the beam—
 Sent from the sunlit forest, where the breeze
 At ev'ning, threw his weary limbs at ease,
 Or, with light pinion, curl'd the streaming sea,
 With a strange music of festivity.

IX.

Now what is here to meet the gazer's eye,
 Let science, and the 'march of mind,' reply—
 Why Lucas' mills, the team-bout and the quay,
 Where cockney sportsmen crowd, at break of day,
 With double-barrell'd gun, perchance to shoot,
 In case they meet with some unlicenc'd brute.
 Thus nothing wild escapes the modern rage,

A hundred years before the bygone age—
Our fathers shot the wild-men, and their sons,
A more improv'd and better race of Huns,
Shoot down the wild-fowl, with percussion guns.
And lo! the dirty wood boat, with a crew
Of fowls for market—eggs and butter too—
With, now and then, a something to retrieve,
The loss of that, I must confess I grieve—
In the rough negro boat-horn, heard by night,
When the wind's wanton, and the moon is bright,
And the stars watch above the sleeping sea,
Winding, alone, upon the Congaree.

X.

Few years have pass'd, sweet river—and no more,
The playful boy that wander'd by thy shore,
In many a prank and gambol, once again,
I watch thy waters leaping to the main!
Time hath brought change upon his rapid wing,
And life's dull seasons, are no longer spring—
The young associates of my early day,
Are dead, or scatter'd widely, far away—
Some are in foreign lands, ordain'd to toil,
For life or wealth, upon a niggard soil;
The Sea hath one I loved, and wild storms sweep
O'er a proud form now bleaching in the deep,
That in the athletic game has link'd with mine—

The first I loved, the last I shall repine,
For no affection like that first strong yoke,
Shall life have pow'r to knit, as death has broke!
And I, the last, less lov'd, and youngest—one,
Doom'd from the first, in life, to move alone;
Scorn'd for the weakness, which became, at length,
More than the pride, and all the pow'r of strength;
Whose passions ever roused, untaught to bend,
Confirm'd the doubtful shook the steadiest friend—
Unused to kindness, so, that, when it spoke,
A world I knew not, o'er my bosom broke,
And all the tears that pride had stay'd so long,
Frozen by bitterness, restrain'd by wrong,
With cataract might' thro' their dark prisons swept,
Each rock o'erborne that held them, and—I wept.
I had not wept in sorrow—had not shed
One tear of anguish, when I watch'd the bed,
Where, lay affection's earliest idol, dead!
Coldness but steel'd me, firmer to despise,
Unkindness loosed, still more, all human ties,
And taught me, tho' the child of nature, still,
That I was free to love or hate, at will!
That Nature was the kindest—but beguil'd,
Too long, by man—believing, when he smil'd,
That truth was in the blandishment, I gave
My heart, to each deceit, still more, a slave,
Till torn at length, by frequent wrong, I grew,

Tho' born to love, a stern, proud hater too,
And every stream of nature, in my soul,
Seal'd with eternal snows, refused to roll!
Love burst the fountain—Love, whose magic breath,
Can cheer the shade, and soothe the pain of death—
Whose rosy hand, pervading earth's wide gloom,
Plants the young flow'r of rapture on the tomb—
To the far pole, where endless winters sway,
Imparts a sun, that compensates the day;
And thro' the night, whose matchless beams appear,
Warming, o'er snowy peaks, the polar year—
Love broke the ice-bound regions of my heart,
And bade his day appear, his night depart!

XI.

Sweet waters of my youth! I've tried the song,
With early themes, but used to sorrow long,
They mingle with strange discords, and repeat
Aught but the notes, my lonely heart deems sweet.
Fond recollections, swelling with thy wave,
How different now, from what my boyhood gave—
Tears have embitter'd the pure streams of truth,
And robb'd the bloom and promises of youth!
Lo! in dim visions, on the wat'ry wild, [smil'd
Now dark with clouds, where nought but sunbeam
Behold the Past, with all its innocent wealth,
Its grateful store of luxury and health;

Rapture wild bounding, whose delirious dreams,
Warm, from the Persian's land of flow'rs and beams,
In fairy pictured hues, o'er boyhood throng,
Waking him up to luxury and song—
Bright skies appear in sunniness and glow,
With fairy radiance, o'er the world below,
And all that's rich in nature, strong in joy,
Shines without tarnish, beams without alloy.
There comes a darker picturing, with these,
Like hell-born monster's over sunlit seas,
Where halcyon quiet broods, on gossamer wing,
And mermaids wake, in coral groves, to sing.
'Tis the dark features of the present, cast,
To cloud the future and destroy the past;
Obscure each glory of my early day,
And blight my soul, and tear its hope away!
'Tinge over waters, wild and fresh before—
Skies whose rich brightness, won me to adore—
Scenes whose extremest loneliness was dear,
With gloom and sorrow, blackness and despair!

XII.

Image of sadness—sadness of the heart,
I weep to watch, yet tremble to depart,
Sadden the more I see thy leaping swell,
Yet feel my sadness, when I say, farewell—
I weep not in thy change—thou art the same,

As when at first, I learn'd to lisp thy name.
And thy full waters roll'd, as now, along,
All purely, deeply, vigorously strong,
And not, that bursting full upon my view,
I've found that false, which Fancy swore was true;
Not that the athlete died at sea, and lay,
Where Mexico still rolls his tideless bay,
And sea-birds spread, and sea-nymphs watch his
grave,
And the cold, midnight winds, his requiem rave;
Nor, that in distant regions, there are some,
Whom Hope oft brings, and Truth delays to come.
To bless the weary eyes that wake at home—
Not these, not all—tho man to Fortune bear,
Each human engine, that may claim a tear—
Tho' blear-eyed Hatred, ready to devise
The rack for that, it never can despise—
Tho' Malice slander, and tho' Folly bring,
And lend to higher agony, its sting—
'Till now, I wept not—nor could these impart,
That woman softness to the bursting heart,
Demanding tears, from eyes, that could not weep,
Whose streams were silent, as their tides were deep.



MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

"The unforgotten music of sad dreams."

OLD PLAY.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The following collection, forms but a very small portion of the fugitive pieces, which have been gathering on my hands for the last two years. I have scarcely any thing to offer in their behalf. In common with the preceding pages, they have grown out of hours, which the reader may, or may not, consider thrown away. They appear, generally, as originally written—I have neither the disposition to improve, nor the courage to destroy them.

APRIL.

April Month—it is the time
When the merry birds do chime,
Airy wood-notes, wild and free,
In secluded bow'r and tree—
Waking up in sunny gear
The attendants of the year,
Whatso'er they chance to be,
In green dress and livery.
Roving wind, whose rosy mouth,
Odour'd by the sunny south,
Presses, as it onward flies,
Beds of many luxuries.
Skimming o'er, as it doth pass,
Pearly dew on bladed grass—
Budding flow'rs, that ope to gain
Some sweet homage from his train,
And, with blushing lips, inclose
Riches of Arabian rose.
Season of fantastic change,
Sweet, familiar, wild and strange—

Time of promise, when the leaf,
Has its tear, but not of grief—
When the winds, by nature coy,
Do both cold and heat alloy,
Nor to either, will dispense
Their delighting preference—
Season, when the earth puts forth
All the wealth that she is worth,
When the tree, all flush of fruit,
Clothes himself in motley suit,
And the waters, woods and sky,
Hear the summer's first-born cry—
Pleasant sound, that speaks of time,
When all nature's early prime,
Had no shadow, knew no chill,
To o'ertop the sunny hill,
Where, kind spirits came to bless
Young creation's loveliness!

April Month—what doth it bring
In the promise of the spring—
Rich profusion, not to pall
But to bless and honor all!
Fruits to tempt the urchin's eye
'To the summer drawing nigh,
When with heart, whose beat is mirth
Leaps he o'er the laughing earth—

And his look is full of haste,
And his lips speak fresher taste,
And the smile of victory,
Twinkles in his roguish eye—
Looks he now, with spirit deep,
Where the mocker's young ones keep,
Happy to secure the spoil,
Meet reward for all his toil!

'Tis the season of the year,
When the fairies first appear,
In the cowslip and the rose,
Dancing, ere their petals close,
'To the music of the breeze,
Sweetest of all melodies,
'Neath the moon's ascending blaze,
That trims the forest with her rays,
And, in melancholy mood,
Silver-laces all the flood!
Then they sport, and who but they
Happy in such infant play,
Tossing, in their random rout,
Flow'rs, and leaves, and fruits about!
Now upon a lily's breast
Seeming, in a mimic rest,
One reposes, glad to be
Absent from her company,

For she there can dream of him
Whose departure keeps her dim.—

'Tis by sentence of their king,
That, until the Lily spring
From the green and velvet ground,
Her boy-lover must be bound
In the bosom of a tree,
Hidden from their harmony—
Cruel Oberon, to part
Sun and flow'r—heart and heart!
But they soon shall meet again,
For the gentle wind and rain,
Have been busy all the night,
Bringing summer's train to light—
And the fairy maid shall hear
Dreamt-of language, in her ear.

Now she dreams that he is free
Underneath the green bay-tree,
That beside her lifts his boughs,
That receive the lover's vows—
He so oft has heard them spoken
And so often seen them broken,
Much he wonders, men should give them—
Women, credulous, believe them.
She wakes, and joy is in her eye—

On the ground, she doth espy .
That same flow'r, whose first appearing,
Brings, to her, the time of cheering—
And she laughs, for by her side
Stands he, in his boyish pride—
And the happy people round,
Glad to see the boy unbound,
Leap in gay festivity,
From green bush and budding tree!
Now upon a moon beam riding,
With the star of eve abiding,
They attend her single motion,
As she passes o'er the ocean—
Bent for hidden islands, where
Mortal barks can never steer--
All is rapture in their flight
Melody and speaking light.
There they gather, void of care,
From the happy world, so near,
Glowing heaven, leaping sea,
Thoughts of untouch'd harmony!
Many a shell is wound to night,
Many a mermaid's bow'r is bright,
As her lover leaps to sight,
On a moonbeam, in a flow'r
Leaping to her sea-wrought bow'r.
In the wild and witching hour,

Stars are filled with newer pow'r,
Heavenly odour in the shower!
Happy race! that may explore
Sounding sea and hidden shore—
Fill the sky with leaping forms,
Win from stars, and suns, and storms—
Who so happy in the sky,
And its home of purity—
Who so happy in the air,
With the sad, heart-music there—
Who that skims the ocean—dwells
Mid the notes of thousand shells—
Far beyond the storm-God's pow'r,
In the wave wash'd coral bow'r—
As the race, thus let to pierce
All the secret universe,
And, before the time is given,
Win the happiness of heaven!
April Month! throughout the year,
What with thee, can well compare—
Where the day, whose dewy sweetness,
And the night, whose touching fleetness,
And the sky, whose purer splendor,
And the flow'r, whose petal tender,
Charming, howsoever they be,
April Month! can mate with thee!

NIGHT-WATCHING.

My heart has been a wanderer—It has sigh'd
For the far converse of the wilderness,
And sought, on Fancy's wings, the fairy grove,
Whose leaves are chords for music, turn'd to tone,
E'en by the rudeness of the Zephyr-God,
Whose wing detach'd them from the delicate stem,
Singing their death-song falling: It has been
Pent up in cities, 'till it burst the bonds,
The cold bonds of society, and sprung
On mid-day wing, to re-assert its own,
Unbounded, eagle-world of Immortality!

The city is around me—but its din
Is hush'd to silence—what a god is sleep,
That can so chain the faculties of men,
The busy crowd, so turbulent erewhile,
Some three hours hence, and now so sternly still,
It seems some eastern city of the Dead!

Where is the artizan whose hammer clink'd
On the fire-darting anvil, thro' the day?

'The pedlar, who was vaunting o'er his wares,
His worldly wealth about him—rich withal?
The tradesman conning o'er his daily sales
With eager eye, and scent upon the watch,
Not to be over-bargain'd?—where the youth,
Eager for honor and distinction, won
By noisy declamation in the crowd,
About the forum?—all are sunk in sleep!
Sleep, the restorer of the sick man's pulse,
Bringer of pleasant dreams and airy thoughts,
That while away the fever'd toils of earth,
And give a bounding impulse to the blood,
Distemper'd by the noise-oppressed brain!
Thou second part of life—that art a death—
Refitting for a newer start in life,
And nerving with a freshness, all but me!

In vain, I look upon the pensive Night,
That hangs her silver crescent on the sky,
Gather'd on fleecy folds, that edge the blue,
Of her vast, wild, pavilion'd canopy,
And wears it, as a warrior does his shield,
Unstain'd by dark device, or mortal dint,
And pure and spotless, as a vestal's heart,
Upon the hour she gives herself to God!
There is no breath to waken up the leaf,
'That sits within my window—all is still—

And how oppressive grows that stillness now!
I cannot sleep—a spirit in the air,
Tho' with the day's fatigue, my form is faint,
Keeps me from slumber. Thought, undying thought,
That dost pervade life's farthest wilderness,
Why may I not repose, with those, who take
The freshness of her slumbers:—why within,
My restless soul, still sounds the silvery chord,
That thrills forever sensibly with life,
Reminding me, untiring of the claim
It bears to immortality—the life,
That is for ever present in my dreams,
That bears me, with a meaning impulse on,
Spite of the rough adventure of the time,
The jostle of far-sighted emulation,
To look beyond myself, and fondly dare
Converse with high intelligence, and power
Beyond man's frail existence.

——— Do the stars

Break forth, with fuller energy, to me,
That thus I wake to watch them? Is the moon
Peculiar in her gaze to-night?—Her glance
Rests on my very couch, and by my side,
Swelling the drapery with long shady waves
Fantastically wrought by fancy's art,
To mate and people all the dreaming hour:

And now a silvery train is drawn afar,
Like a faint thread, upon the utmost verge
Of the horizon, as if it would unite
The earth I wake on, and the heaven I watch.
It is the star of my nativity—
What wonder I should wake, to watch it then,
With a deep fixedness—a strong anxiety,
To gather from its seeming, all my hope—
Ambition's peril—fitter gods than men,
Which lives unto the peril of the life
Which is my mortal being—wearing away
Consuming as a night-lamp, dim, untrimm'd,
The frame and sinews, of the wither'd form,
The lowly boor had laugh'd at—Lo! afar,
It shoots along—and sheds in its lone flight
A rich and tremulous lustre. Does it wake
In sympathy with me, alone, among
Its starry train of rich intelligences,
As I, among my fellows of the earth?—
Restless, alike—and does ambition dwell
So high above the mortal part of life?
I've heard it said, ere this, in ancient time,
When gods were on the earth, in guise of men,
And men in action, rivall'd the high gods,
That 'twas the quality of heaven, and so
Became transmitted to the humbler race,
With whom they lightly mingled, and to whom,

They gave such sad inheritance of pride,
High reaching, fierce desire, unbounded want,
Love of far rule, undying thirst of praise,
And power, and hope, and searching after sway,
Thro' peril and foul circumstance, and blood—
Heedless, that pain, and death were in the gift,
Tho' coupled with high honor—fatal death,
That saps the springs of life, of love, of peace,
Eats out the heart with a concealed fire,
And leaves the desolate wreck, blasted, as 'tis,
By the fierce-fires of Spirit, overthrown,
E'en by the pitiless breath of wind, it scorns!

Oh! what is Fame, that I should darken youth—
The fresh attire of Morning—the gay sun,
Of my young destiny, that seem'd so fair,
With watching thro' the night—the sweet, long night.
That fills my eyes with gentle drops, to see—
Sweet, tho' they flow from out the fount of tears,
Upon my heart, like dew upon the flow'r,
In Hermon's valley! Doth to it belong,
Acknowledgment 'mong men, in words, whose tone,
Like music, ministers unto the spirit,
Whose watchfulness is madness? No, alas!
Nor Time himself, shall venture to retrieve,
The life that I have lost! Yet, be this told,
In after years, when, at my fireside blaze,

No chair shall be in waiting for my form,
No eye, to smile at my unlook'd approach,
No welcome, mine—however he hath fail'd
To gain a planet's fix'd sway in the sky,
'Mong the high fires that he so oft hath watch'd,
The star still burnt within him, and the ray
Shone o'er him, with a splendor, that he soug'
Most nobly, tho' perchance, he reach'd it no

THE LOST PLEIAD.

I.

Not in the sky,
Where it was seen—
Nor, on the white tops of the glistening wave—
Nor in the mansions of the hidden deep—
However green,
In its enamell'd caves of mystery—
Shall the bright watcher have
A place—nor once again proud station keep!

II.

Gone, gone!
O! never more, to cheer
The mariner, who hold his course alone,
On the Atlantic, thro' the weary night,
When the waves turn to watchers, and do sleep—
Shall it appear—
With the sweet fixedness of certain light,
Shining upon the shut eye of the blue deep!

III.

O! when the shepherd on Chaldaea's hills,
Watching his flocks,
Looks forth, in vain for thy first light to come,
Warning him home—
From his deep sleep, among the sky-kiss'd rocks—
How shall he wake, when dewy silence fills
The scene, to wonder at the weight of night,
Without the one strong beam, whose blessed light,
As to the wandering child, his native rills,
Was natural to his sight!

IV.

Vain, vain!

O! less than vain, shall he look forth—
The sailor from his barque—
(Howe'er the North,
Doth raise his certain lamp, when tempests lower,
To catch the light of the lost star again—
The weary hour,
To him, shall be more weary, when the dark
Displays not the lost planet on her tower.

V.

And lone

Where its first splendor, shone—

Shall be that pleasant company of stars:—
How should they know that death,
The happy glory of the immortal, mars,
When like the Earth, and all its common breath,
Extinguish'd are the pure beams of the sky,
Fallen from on high—
And their concerted springs of harmony
Snapt rudely, and all pleasant music, gone.

VI.

A strain—a mellow strain,
Of parting music, fill'd the earth and sky—
The stars lamenting, in unborrowed pain,
That one of the selectest one's, must die—
The brightest of their train!
Alas! it is the destiny—
The dearest hope is that which first is lost,
The tenderest flower is soonest nipt by frost—
Are not the shortest-lived, the loveliest—
And like the wandering orb that leaves the sky,
Look they not brightest, when about to fly,
The desolate spot they blest?

SUMMER NIGHT-WIND.

How soothingly, to close the sultry day,
Comes the soft breeze from off the murmuring wave
That break away in music—and I feel,
As a new spirit were within my veins,
And a new life in nature. My hot frame,
Awakes, from the deep weariness, that fell
Upon me, like a cloud. A newer nerve
Braces my unwearied eye-lids, and I gaze,
And feel the gentle whisperings of night,
Lifting the hair upon my moisten'd brows,
As if a spirit fann'd me. Slowly, at fits,
The wind ascends my lattice, and climbs in,
And swells the shrinking drapery of my couch,
Then melts away around me, Now it comes,
Again, and with a perfume in its wake,
Gather'd from spicy gardens. Some fair maid,
Knows not, who robs her roses of their sweets,
When, at the morn, she finds them drooping low,
From their nocturnal amours. Is it not,
A gentle providence, that thus provides,

With odour, like to this, the unfavor'd one,
Who else, had never known it. Pleasant breeze,
Misfortune well may love thee—thou hast fled
From gayer regions—lofty palaces,
Fair groves, and gardens of nice excellence,
'To wanton with the lonely. It is meet
'That he should leave his couch to welcome thee.
Thou art most lavish, and thou should'st not steal
Thro' a close lattice, with but half thy train,
When he would gather all of thee, and feel
'Thy energies around him. 'Thou art sweet—
And comest, with a mournful whispering,
That speaketh a glad music to the heart,
Jarr'd by long restlessness, and out of tone,
From the distemper'd and oppressive heat,
Of the long day in summer. I will sleep,
Beneath my window: Thou meanwhile, wilt come,
And fan thy wings above my throbbing brow,
And put aside the tangles of my hair,
With a mysterious kindness. And I know,
That when thou bringest me the breath of flowers,
Thou'lt bear away my sighs, and bring them back,
Laden with comforters, from fairy groves,
That fling away their loveliness to thee,
That they may win thee to the same embrace,
Thou dost bestow upon me, as I sleep.

THE STARS.

“Look, wretched one, upon the stream that rolleth by the dwelling of thine old age, and thou wilt behold the very stars that have shone on thee in thy boyhood.”

Let me look on the stars. They bring me back,
With strange persuasiveness, to the old time,
And pleasant hours of boyhood. All returns,
That I had long forgotten. Scarce a scene,
Of childish prank or merriment, but comes,
With all the freshness of the infant year,
As 'twere an atom of some yesterday.
The green, remember'd at the winter night,
For the encounter of the rapid ball—
The marble play, the hoop, the top and kite,
Each, in its regular season, has its time
In the revival of my boyhood, then!—
And, as the years flew by—as I became
Warmer, and more devoted—fix'd and strong—
Growing in the affections, when I ceased
To grow in stature or proportion—then,

When life, in all its freshness, darted by,
And voices grew into a spell, that hung,
Thro' the dim hours of night, about the heart,
Making it tremble strangely—and blue eyes,
Were stars, that had a power over us,
As fated, dimly at nativity—
And older men, were monitors, too dull
For passionate youth—and reason, and all excellence
(Bating the honied sentences of lips,
That may have vied with coral, and have won)
Were to be gather'd from one source alone,
Whose thought and word were inspiration, life—
That we had bartered life, itself, to lose!—
And that heart-madness that belongs to youth,
That spell upon affection—that deep light,
Which makes all other objects dark, or fills,
Absorbs, or crushes out each other light,
Is on us, as a dream, that binds us down,
And takes our reason from us: When all these,
Have been with us, and carried us away,
To strange conceits of future happiness,
But to be thought on, as delusions all,
Yet such delusions as we still must love—
When these have parted from us—when the sky,
Hath lost the charm of its ethereal blue,
And the nights lose their freshness, and the trees,
No longer have a welcome sound for love—

And the moon wanes into a paler bright—
And all the poetry that shook the leaves,
And all the perfume that was on the flowers,
Sweetness upon the winds, light in the sky,
The green of the carpetted vale, the dew,
That morning hangs on the enamel'd moss—
The hill-side, the acclivity, the plain—
(Sweeter that Solitude was sleeping there)
Are gone, as the last hope of misery—
When the one dream of thy deluded life,
Hath left thee, to awaken—not to see
The pleasant morning, but the gloomy night,
When sight becomes a weariness, and Hope,
No longer gathers from its barren path,
One flow'r of promise—when disease is nigh,
And all thy bones are racking, and thy thought,
Is of foul, nauseous, ineffectual drugs,
Which thou wilt take, altho' thou know'st in vain—
And not a hand is nigh to quench thy thirst,
With one poor cup of water—and thy thought
Is of the fading sky, and the bright sun,
Which thou art losing—and the sable pall,
And melancholy carriage, and of those,
Who but acquire thee now, when thou art lost,
And only weep for that, which thou dost leave—
And thou hast bid adieu to earthly things,
Fought thro' the last, long struggle with thyself,

Of resignation to extremest death,
And offer'd up thy pray'r of penitence,
Doubtful of its acceptance, yet prepar'd,
As well as thy condition will admit,
For the last change in thy unhappy life—
Look, if thou canst, from thy closed lattice forth,
And take thy farewell of the calm blue sky;
And if the melancholy stars be there,
Then will the current of thy thoughts, flow back,
To the fair practice of thy innocent childhood,
And, if thou hast been wretched, thou wilt weep
Over thy recollections--and thy tears,
Shall be, as a sweet pray'r, sent up to Heav'n.

STANZAS TO IDA.

I.

Sweet Ida, now upon the sea,
And far from land, and darting on,
I feel how much I lose in thee,
And cheerless, watch the sun go down.
He sets behind the distant shore,
Which I have left, and where thou art;
And all is dark, my path before—
I lose my light, I leave my heart!

II.

Thou may'st not watch, when I am gone—
Thou will not weep my absence now—
Thou art not, like myself, alone,
And hast no chill'd or aching brow.
Many will watch thy weary hours,
And, should disease, with venom'd breath,
Enter thy gay and happy bow'rs,
Will chase away, and conquer, death.

III.

For me, alas! what hopes arise,
What prayers ascend, to bless my fate—
Shall mine be calm and breezy skies,
Or, does the stroke of wo, await!
I sit upon the bounding bark,
And strike my lyre of wo, to thee—
The clouds come down, the night is dark,
And, moans aloud, the sullen sea!

IV.

According, with my loneliness,
How sweet its murmurs are, to me!
The voice of storms, the sea's distress,
Than music's song, unless with thee!
O! could I send my thought abroad,
To touch thy soul, or meet thine ear,
Thou'dst see those passions all outlaw'd,
That winds now mock, and waters hear.

V.

On, with the broken lyre, and heart,
Thou bark of destiny, away—
Swift as thy shooting prow can part,
The whistling winds and mounting spray.

Ah! little reck'st thou, in thy flight,
The song I pour upon the sea;
And thou wilt hail the morning's light,
And I--oh, Ida, aught but thee.

DIRGE OF THE LEAVES.

The leaves,
The pleasant and green leaves, that hung
Abroad, in the gay summer winds, are dead—
And earth receives
The last of their brown honors, idly strung,
On the old stems, to which, they fondly clung,
Within her bed—
I marvel that their last dirge be not said!
The breeze, shall sing it, as he leaves the main,
To scour the plain;
And goes to rest among the tall, old trees;
How will he sigh, with pain,
To find his ev'ning couch of luxuries
Wither'd upon the ground, where he hath lain.

Oh! then,
With a deep mournfulness, and plaintive fall,
Shall he lament,
That they are cast away, beyond his call,
And he not present at their burial—

Nor, to prevent

The eager frost from coming down that glen.

Thus sings he, in his grief,

The last lament above the wither'd leaf:

'O! never more,

Unburied honors of the pilgrim year,

Shall ye in all your morning dress of green

Appear!

The summer time is o'er,

That we have seen—

And all your early loveliness, how brief!

I shall forget ye on some other shore,

But o'er your fruitless, melancholy bier,

I leave my tear.'

Away!

After that brief lament he spreads his wings,

The licensed rover of far Indian seas—

Now, that the hidden charm that led astray,

No longer clings,

With blossoming odor, wooing his wild flight;

And to the sunset dwelling of the day,

With the sad form of Night,

Speeds on his way that melancholy breeze!

THE LAST LEAF.

I.

It was the last of all the leaves, that Spring in rich
array,
Had sent, in plenitude of power, to woo his young
bride, May—
When the Sun, at morning rose and shone, without
a single cloud,
And the pale cold Moon, at night, alone, walk'd
consciously and proud;
It hung upon a pleasant tree, that now, was stripp'd
and bare,
And it—of all its family, the last, and saddest
there—
Thus sung it, in a mournful tone, while winds were
sighing by,
And the cold, November nights came down, 'neath
a bleak and wintry sky.

II.

“I am the last of all my race—I’ve seen my brethren
fade—

The bright ones, I no longer trace, that once these
boughs array'd:—

There was a spirit in the air, upon the gentle morn,
When I, and all my brethren there, in dewy green
were born,

That shook its fragrant wings around, till light
from every bough,

Stream'd o'er the green and mantled ground, that
is so lonely now—

And summer leaves, and summer birds, com-
mingling, fill'd the sky,

So bright—ye saw, and deem ye not, 'twas cruel
they should die?

III.

Theirs, were the sunny hours—they grew, when
mockers-mimics throng,

Our green and mantling branches through, to war-
ble forth each song;

And many a shining insect came, and many a bird,
whose note,

Of morning vigor, nought could tame, on evening
airs to float,

When thro' our forms at eventide, the icy moon
beams come,

And fairy shapes are seen to glide, when human
sounds are dumb,

Singing those mournful madrigals, too fine for
mortal ear,
But which, at whispering intervals, it was our lot
to hear.

IV.

“Mine was the fate to see them bloom, in fellowship
and pride—
Mine was the eye, beheld their tomb—would, with
them, I had died!
For, not a bird, now comes to make his shelter in
my boughs,
And gentle lovers now forsake the spot that heard
their vows—
The roving Zephyrs too, that came, with roset
breath and bloom,
Now scorch me with a blast of flame, or chill me
o’er with gloom;
And sad, I watch, in lonesomeness, the dark
ground bleak and bare,
Or, strew’d with shapes I love not less, than when
they comrades were.

V.

“Oh! soon shall come the darker hours, and I
shall be with them,
The green-eyed leaves, the rose-lipped flowers,
long shaken from each stem—

Last night, a Tempest shook around, the branches
o'er my head,
And whirl'd my brethren from the ground, that
long since had been dead—
And well I knew, the boding came, to warn me to
prepare,
A fellowship with them to claim, beyond all chan-
ges here,
And all the streams of life withdraw, and colder
I become,
No breeze shall woo, no sun shall thaw, and now"—
the leaf was dumb!

VI.

That night, a Tempest shook the wood, the mut-
tering sky was dread,
And he, who heard that last leaf sing, well knew
that it was dead—
Yet, came he at the morning's dawn, and stood
beneath the tree,
And look'd, in vain, for it was gone, that latest leaf
to see;
But in the tree there was a bird, at intervals that
sung,
And mournful, were the notes he heard, from that
strange warbler's tongue,

And much he mused upon the strain, in after seasons long—

‘The leaf shall meet its race again,’ the burden of that song!

MORNING IN THE FOREST.

I.

The forest hath a sweet and mournful tale,
In its green foliage, and whispering breeze,
That sighing, with a wild, unearthly gale,
Maketh soft music with the tall old trees;
A solemn blending of the passing hour,
With gentle themes and accents of strange pow'r.

II.

And morning comes among them, with a still,
And gliding mystery, on the breaking grey,
Of the fresh East; and the low murmuring rill,
Is strongest heard as ushering in the day,
Who, mounted on his chariot of fire, [spire.
Makes the tall forest glow with many a burning

III.

This is a spot—if there hath ever been,
As ancient ballads tell, in legends sooth,
Such forms as are not earthly, earthward seen,

With shapes of light, and terms of endless youth,
Then do I ween, that this should be the spot,
Where they should come—and yet, I see them not!

-IV.

And fancy hath been with me, to deceive
The sterner reason of my sense, and show
To youthful expectation, forms that live,
But in the fairy land of eke I trow;
For here they come not, tho' I have bow'd down,
From ev'ning 'till the grey-eyed morn came on.

V.

And sure no fitter spot had fairy sought,
To practise her light gambol in—the grass,
Glowing like gorgeous carpatry, inwrought,
Doth the poor hand of humble art surpass—
Nature, hath sure been lab'ring here, to spread,
Meet couch, and purple, for poetic bed.

IV.

And I will lay me down—and if there come
No fairy to delight me with her song,
There is a marvel in the retiring gloom,
That will, in miser-Fancy's thought, prolong
A spiritual presence, far abroad,
His works around me—I have been with God.

STANZAS TO IDA.

I.

To leave thee, when my hope is gone,
Might well demand a tear,
Did I not know, that there are none,
Who would esteem it dear:—
This mournful thought to memory clings,
That all its hopes may be,
Like healing pow'r, in seal'd-up springs,
That none may find or see!

II.

A bird is on the bough at night,
And mournful is its tone;
It tells, that ere the morning's light,
It shall be left alone!
That the young mate, whose purple wing,
Had with it, skim'd the seas,
Is in the sky, a distant thing,
And sporting on the breeze.

III.

That lone one, left behind, to make
Its fortune, tried in vain,
Will ne'er by bow'r, or cover'd lake,
Find that young wing again!—
On tallest pine-tree perch'd, it looks,
When morning's glance is fair,
And 'mongst the leaves, and in the brooks,
To find its shadow there!

IV.

Across the desert, it has braced
Its sad wing, to pursue
The fitful shadow, seldom traced,
But ever held in view.
Ere morning's buskins brush the dews,
It journies on its flight;—
Where will it gather food, or choose
Its resting place, by night!

V.

The lone one sat within a tree,
A pleasant tree, I ween,
For, there the breeze came wooingly,
Among the branches green;
And from a stream, that ran below,

Came up a pleasant sound;
Like voices, long forbid to flow,
Now glad to be unbound!

VI.

“Thy heart is weary, not thy wing—
Why dost thou not pursue
O'er earth and sea, the kindred thing
To which thy birth-plume grew!
Thy plumage will have lost its grace,
Thine eye its sunny light,
Unless thou tak'st thy morning race,
And mak'st thy bow'r at night.

VII.

“The world has many forests, leaves
Innumerable, shroud
Thy form; the eye, that for thee grieves
Will look not in the crowd:—
Ascending, in the far blue sphere,
The highest in thy spring,
Go up! the bright, blue heav'n is there,
And meet thy kindred wing.

VIII.

“All day hath it the ocean fann'd.
On pinion weariless,

And now, as it doth seek the land,
Do thou be there, to bless!
Its spirit, like thine own, will seek
The ev'ning sun's descent,
And when thy wing grows weary, weak,
Thou shalt be still unspent!

IX.

“And if thy fortune baffle thee,
And thou shalt find it not,—
Be glad, for that thy destiny,
Hath so decreed thy lot.
For disappointment shall be hush'd,
And thou no more be sad,
And the weary spirit, once so crush'd
Shall yet be more than glad!”

X.

Thus spoke the spirit of that brook—
In accents to my ear,
But vainly, might my bosom, look
For tones of comfort there!
How worse than idle is the strain,
That offers peace to one,
Whom words shall never cheat again—
Whom words have left undone!

XI.

Give me, if comfort thou would'st give,
Dull spirit, from thy store—
Again, in innocence, to live,
My hours of childhood o'er—
Take from me sight, and sense, and speech,
All beings that have breath,
What I have ever learnt, unteach—
Ay, spirit—give me death!

TO THE SAME.

I.

Dear phantom of my midnight hour,
That haunt'st my couch, and fill'st my sleep,
With hopes, that long have lost their pow'r,
And love, whose buried form, I weep!
Before my eye thou stand'st alone,
And on my soul thy looks arise,
So strong, I sometimes think, I've flown,
To join thee, in thy native skies;
But, that amidst those thoughts of heav'n,
The tear has stolen into my eye,
And I have thus been coldly driven,
Back to the earth, I cannot fly!

II.

Sweet spirit, when that earth is still,
And all the busy hum of men
Is hush'd in slumber, dost thou fill
My chamber, with thy presence, then?
Tell me, yet tell me not, I dream—
'Tis sweet to think that thou art near,

And that my hours of watching teem,
With converse, once, and still so dear:—
Let me still think, as I have thought,
That thou sit'st by my couch at night,
And weav'st the visions, kindly wrought,
To soothe my heart, to bless my sight.

III.

Oh! dearer, spirit, as thou art,
Thus all immortal, (therefore dead,
Forever, to my watchful heart)—
Than all the living world thou'st fled—
The love thou'et cherish'd, cannot die—
Alas! that broken hearts should beat!
While Hope, though crush'd by Memory,
Builds up his altar of deceit—
Altho' assured thou art no more,
He still uprears his grateful shrine,
And vows, that on that dreamless shore,
Thy heart shall meet again with mine!

TO THE SAME.

I.

To thee, howe'er in early days,
I struck the willing notes of praise,
Nor grudged the grateful strain,
I dare not now attune one song,
'To love, remember'd, O! how long,
Thro, happiness and pain!

II.

'Thine old dominion o'er my heart,
Thou still maintain'st in every part,
As firmly as before;
Yet, ah! the dream of hope which came,
Of old, to warm it into flame,
Shall never warm it more!

III.

Should not the dream, the fear, the pain,
The dread of love's unhappy reign,
Be o'er, when Hope has fled;
When thou art lost with all the charms,

That wooed me to thy snowy arms—
And memory lives instead!

IV.

Alas! my destiny, is still
A greater tyrant than my will,
Since love remains alone—
And o'er my heart, and in my brain,
Exerts a wild and weary reign,
And will not now begone.

V.

Fond wretch! that like a pilgrim, stands,
Return'd in age from foreign lands,
Within his ruin'd dome;
And stirs the ashes with his cane,
In hope to find, once more the fane,
That mark'd his childhood's home!

VI.

A greater ruin even than they,
For none of those, of yesterday,
Who circled him around,
Are there, to greet him with a tear,
And say, his heart is buried, where
Yon hillock breaks the ground!

VII.

Thus love within my lonely heart,
Stirs the sad ruins in each part,
And from his search, discerns—
That Hope is buried long, and cold—
What truth and time, too late, unfold,
And love, too early, learns!

STANZAS.

I.

Cold, in its solitary cell,
My heart reposes, lapt in tears;
Or, rises, for awhile, to tell
How slow, the chain of being, wears;
Impatient of the long delay,
And fill'd with deep and restless thirst,
Why does it linger thus away,
Nor spurn the chain at once, and burst.
Thus frozen in its onward course,
And chill'd with early, fatal blight,
Even love's own power, hath lost its force,
And beauty, were a shade to sight.

• II.

To be, is not a pain so deep,
But being thus!—and not to be,
Comes on me, with a snail-like creep,
'That must not else be taught by me!
Ah would it were, that we could urge

The stern and tedious time along,
As barks, upon the restless surge,
Driven, with a tide, unmatched, and strong.
Oh, not for me, the crime in thought—
Yet 'twere a boon I may not fear—
'Twere sure, that howsoe'er unsought,
Death were not shrunk from, were he near!

TO THYRZA.

I.

Forgive me, if my looks are sad,
When thou art free from aught like wo,
I would be, if I could be glad,
And thou, alone, can'st make me so.

II.

Let but thy cheek be pale awhile,
And dim thine eye, and cloud thy mien,
And let thy lip forbear to smile,
And be as sad, as I have been!

SONNETS.*

Come down, ye dark brow'd ministers of thought,
Ye that are of the mountains, and do tend
Upon the morning, when with clouds o'erwrought,
Her brow doth blacken in the storms, that blend,
With her strong pinions—lifting her along,
From her screener beauties, into gloom.
Descend, ye dark indwellers with the strong,
Ye of the magic mystery and song,
Whose voice is on the ice-crag of the Swiss,
Where Freedom built her ærie, and the bloom
Of her untrammell'd freshness, sent abroad
Life on the nations, till they own'd the God!
There is a spirit that belongs to this—
Him of the lyre and spell, that worships ye unaw'd!

*Under this head, will be found some two or three pieces in the dramatic blank, belonging, originally to a couple of Tragedies, which in my twenty first year, I committed to the flames. How the passages quoted, were preserved from the fate of their companions, I am unable to say. They fell, at a later period, under my view, and with some little alterations, are now published.

Oh! sable-vested Night! how dost thou bring
Strange fancies to my soul—peopling the hour
Of vacancy and midnight, with a pow'r
Of mystery and thought, to which I cling,
With an enthusiast's worship, and my heart
Drinks in the enchantment of thy solemn spells,
'Till I become, of thy own world, a part—
And all my thought, at reason's rule rebels.
Each sound that only jars the Zephyr's pinion,
To me, has something, in that strange, sweet time,
Wrought by some minstrel-god, in his dominion
Of spell and song, and fresh, and morning clime—
And when I wake, my cheek and eye's dim light,
Proclaim, I have been wandering all the night!

Can I not lay me down, at once, and die?—

Oh! there is peace within the quiet grave!
No hopes to cheat, no aspirations high,
No heart to throb, no anguish'd brain to rave—
I shall not shudder at the approaching ill,
As the young leaf, which doth anticipate,
The coming of the cold, which is its fate,
And shrinks, without a murmur, to its will.
Dreams shall not win me unto happiness,
'To crush me, when I waken up, the more;—
Nor shall the visions, that once came, to bless,
Wear different features, then from what they wore;

The breeze may whistle o'er my grave, in vain,
I must feel pleasure, when removed from pain.

Thou wilt remark my fate, when I am dead—
Let not fools scoff above me, and proclaim,
That I had, vainly, struggled after fame,
'Till the good oil of my young life was shed;
And I became a mockery, and fell
Into the yellow leaf, before my time;—
A sacrifice, even in my earliest prime,
To that, which thinn'd the heav'ns, and peopled hell!
I feel my spirit fed upon my form,
As a disease within me, that still grows,
As I incline unto my last repose,
A vulturous, and all undying worm—
Let fools not mock me, when I am no more—
And yet—I ask no friendship, to deplore!

Ambition owns no friend—yet be thou mine—
I have not much to win thee, yet if song,
However humble, may a name prolong,
My lay shall seek to give a life to thine!
Let this reward thee for thy kindly thought—
'Tis all I ask of thee—thus, when my years
Are ripen'd to their full, or early wrought,
To a short term of being, and my tears,
Haply for me, are staid—and I, at rest,

Think of me kindly—when men utter things,
Which wrong my name and to it darkly clings,
Shadowing its purity—do thou attest,
Mine eye was on the sun—I could not bend
To the dull clouds, when I might still ascend!

To-morrow, I shall have no charge in life—
The fair sky shall wane from me—the bright sun
Shall lend no heat to cheer me—and the breeze,
That comes so winningly about me now,
Shall only stir the long grass on my grave.
The moon will rest upon me, in her walks,
And I, that loved to watch her, will not see,
One glance of the sweet picture of her smile.

To-morrow—let me tell it thee to day—
Take this small token, to the gaze of her
Whose name thou here behold'st. I've written on't
Some magical lines. Do thou observe the face
With which she reads them—and if she shed no tear,
It will be well, thou canst not tell me so!

The barque is ready, for your carriage hence,
My friend—and you are now about to tread
The English shore again. Alas! I sigh,
When aught diverts my thought to my own land;
For in my heart a labor lies conceal'd,

That is not the less irksome. I've had dreams,
Eustace—and, tho' I would not be a boy,
They've had much weight upon me, and I feel
A strong forecast, that I shall never more,
Be, on the English shore, a visitor.
I have a sister Eustace, you will find
At Sheffield—bid her be of cheer, I pray,
For I am well. Be sure and send her this—
'Tis a small token, but to her enough—
Since, 'tis the giver's thought, and not his gift,
'The token carries with it. Be her friend,
As you have been her brother's—he, I feel,
Will need nor hate, nor friendship from you more.

Ay, I have heard enough—
Ye men of Rome, yet not as Rome has been!
I've heard enough—ye cannot tell me more,
In all your volubility of speech,
Were your time lengthen'd to eternity!
Ye would depose Manilius!—do it then,
Ye dogs, and leap into his state, at once,
And growl and battle with yourselves, for bones,
That dogs have pluck'd before—ye Jackal troops,
That have a nose for carrion, and can scent
Your bruitage o'er the Tiber, at its swell.

I'll hear no more from ye—ye are too foul,
And taint my garden air: now get ye gone—

Depose Manilius, send him into exile—
Tell him to shake the dust from off his feet,
Nor curse ye all, 'twere waste of honest breath,
And like the holy blood, so often shed,
T'were less than thrown away, on thankless Rome

Last night, the moon shone suddenly in streams
Upon my pillow, and my little child,
Who lay, like Innocence, upon my arm,
Turn'd, discontentedly, beneath the glare,
And her sweet violet eye-lids, half unclosed—
'Till I, with cautious hand, removed her face,
And press'd her to my bosom, and she sunk,
Into a breathing slumber—but her voice,
As if her sense were conscious of my care,
Whispered most audibly, yet faintly too,
'Father'—in her half broken modes of speech!

Kind spirits! but it was the sweetest sound,
That ever took my sad heart by surprise—
And, tho' ashamed of such unmanliness,
I felt a lurking weakness in my eye,
And press'd her closer to my breast again.

It was a picture of much loveliness—
A picture, men would love to look upon,
Tho' seldom so permitted. A sweet child,
That laugh'd in the possession of his prize,

Lay in its mother's arms, and drew its milk,
And nutriment, and life, from a half hid,
And half reveal'd, and delicate, white round,
That seem'd an orb of purity and peace!
Its little lip, and full and glowing cheek
Were of one colour—rich and young and fresh—
And only such, are beautiful! Its eye
Glanced archly on its property—the Imp,
As if it knew such things were not for all!
And then it playfully upturned the dress,
And peep'd beneath, and with its little hands,
Possess'd itself of all, and placed its head
Upon its natural pillow, and look'd up
In that sweet mother's face, and smiled with joy,
And knew not, happy Ignorant! the tears
Upon that mother's cheek, for it, were shed!

My child, my beautiful child, when I am gone,
Strangers and time, will have untaught thee all,
Thy father's love; ere thou wilt well have known
Thou had'st a father, tho' his name thou'lt call—
And I shall leave behind me, nought, that may
Teach thee thy loss, unless it be my song—
And that, perchance, will scarcely linger long,
To keep my memory coupled with my lay!
Sad lay! invoked in sorrow, tuned by wrong,
Harsh and unmusical, yet sadly deep—

Such notes as tempests waken, when they sweep
O'er wind-harps, with a pinion swift and strong!
Breaking perchance, each string, yet lifting high,
A dying shriek of mournful melody.

I saw it in my dream. O! could I task
My sense again to slumber, nor awake
So long as the fair vision were in sight.—
I will not do it so much wrong, to make
My rude words, show the picture thou dost ask;
But I should feel it poorly, if delight
Be only in my feature—for I feel,
From the devoted counsels of my heart,
That I should look enjoyment, nor appeal
To low discourse of language, to bepaint
My morning vision of calm happiness:—
That dream, which it would madden, to reveal,
And which even song would render spiritless—
It was such deep, such fine, heart-touching tenderness.

Thou hast enamor'd me of woodland scenes,
Good shepherd, for thou tell'st them with air
That might have won a wilder thought afar,
Than his, who sits beside thee, while he gleans
Thy secret from thee, of sweet happiness—
Inborn content, and quiet humbleness—

That cannot be o'erthrown by rising high,
And so attracteth not the gaze of envious eye.
Thy blessings are of that serener kind,
Which, as they call no passions forth, must be
Only the lighter curl that breaks the sea
Into a pleasant murmur—no rough wind
Is there, to rouse the sleeping ocean's form,
And call the whirlwind forth, and usher in the storm.

Ah! me, that sleeping, like Endymion,
Upon a gentle hill-slope, flow'r-o'erstrewn,
I could be laid, to wait the coming moon,
And her sweet smile, as a rich garment, don.
Let the winds be around me—and the dell,
That breaks into the valley, catch the sound,
And with its many voices, send around
Aerial music, till the wizard spell
Awake the night-nymphs to attend my sleep—
And she, my mistress, from her ocean cell,
Arise on the blue mountains, with a swell
Of those sweet noises from the caverns deep,
Wherein the mermaid and mermen dwell—
Then, from my bruised couch of hill-flow'rs, let
me leap.

Moonlight is down among the pleasant hills,
And looking on the waters—let me go—

I would not seek my couch, while such a show
Of beauty, all the free empyreal, fills—
The city is behind me—it is bright,
So liberal and and so lavish is the night,
As conscious of her riches, she bestows
Her wealth in wide profusion, where she goes—
Downwards, the shadows of the houses, cast,
Are sick, with the gay loveliness of night,
And as her living beams are rushing past,
How do they shrink before her fairy light.
Let me go forth—for this must be the hour,
When gentle spirits walk, and fairy forms have
pow'r.

Sweetness, and gamesome images, surround
Thy rest, young pilgrim!—pleasant breezes come,
And bear the odors of the blossoming ground,
And flap their wings above thy cheek's rich bloom!
And, O! that life may glide away with thee,
In infantile enjoyments!—while I pray,
Above thy baby-couch, that thou may'st be
Guarded by angels, innocent as they,
I would deny thee all the hopes that crowd
O'er childhood's pranking hours. Thou should'st
not dream
Of aught in store, where childhood could be
proud—

Nor, should deceitful fancy lend one beam,
To dazzle thee in the far coming years,
When life may be all bitterness and tears.

Come, sit thee down beside me—I would rest,
Upon this bed of sedge—the rivulet near,
Meanwhile, will send up to the watchful ear,
Some gentle murmurs, like a song, repress,
By tears of the sad heart that pours it out!—
I do remember, it is now about

A score of summers, since I laid me down,
Beside this little streamlet, as I left

The noise and the confusion of yon town,
To which I now return—of wealth, bereft,
But visions, full and flowing, yet to come;—
My heart was glowing then in primal bloom—
This rivulet, glided on, as it doth now—
Yet—mark the life of changes on my brow!

The spirits that do dress the flow'rs with dew,
And trip it, 'neath the moon, upon the green,
Have been with me, and I have heard and seen
Their gossamer forms—among them, some I knew.
Theirs, were most pleasant duties, for they crept
Beside me, as upon my couch, I slept,
And built fair images to glad my sight—
Then, with sweet songs, they hush'd me to repose;

For I had partly waken'd, 'neath the light
Of a rich vision—which, I could not close
My eyes, for looking on; until they won
The slumber, I had frightened, back upon
My heavy lids, and so I past the night—
Ah! me, I would that this long day were done.

I think, good shepherd, you did dream of this—
Our fancies are most frolicsome, and oft
They bear our weakened images aloft,
Where they do lose themselves in very bliss.
Beshrew me, but it is a pleasant spot,
For fairies to make merry on, untill
The steeple's clock, from yonder grey brow'd hill,
Doth dissipate their airy sports, I wot:—
Yet, 'till the dawning, they may brush the dew,
And it may be, perchance, in day-light too,
Albeit we see them not—the light of day,
Perchance, may take their lesser light away,
As the stars fade, when the young moon is fair,
And yet, we know, they still are shining there!

FAREWELL TO IDA.

I.

Farewell, Farewell! the mournful tie,
That bound so long, is broke at last;
And nought is left me but to die—
Or live, and bear alone, the blast.
And either fate 'twere death to gain,
Since from this exile never free:—
Ah! death itself, were less than pain,
Since life has torn me thus from thee!

II.

The words of comfort, they bestow—
How worse than idle to my ear!
Since I must feel, where'er I go,
That I have more to hope, than fear!
The worst is known, and all the rest,
Go where I will, I may not fly—
For life assures my lonely breast,
That all that's left me, is to die.

III.

The truth too well assur'd—once known—

I might confide in winds and waves;

And dream that Hope's not wholly gone,

And peace, not only in our graves.

This idle word, even this, dear love,

'Twere less than kind, should reach thy heart—

Alas! our tears can only prove,

We meet, and have but met, to part.

NOTES.

NOTE 1, PAGE 7.

———“*the Gothic Roderick's reign.*”

Roderick, by Historians, termed the last of the Goths; see Dr. Southey's Poem on the subject. The fate of Roderick has never been positively known. He is supposed to have been drowned in his flight from the field of Xeres de la Frontera, when the Moors made the conquest of his highly romantic country.

NOTE 2, PAGE 7.

“*Her own base son,*” &c.———

Julian, the father of the Spanish Helena, Cava, or as she is sometimes called by the Moorish Historians, Florinda. There is no country so rich in material for Poetry and the Drama, as old Spain, at the period to which we refer, and after. No country, in the details of whose history, so much of genuine romance may be said to mingle—we wonder the field should be so little explored.

NOTE 3, PAGE 8.

“*A beacon light to death and flame.*”

There is something even ludicrous in the strange union, which the Spanish adventurers in Mexico, contrived to make of religious devotion and enthusiasm, and their own blood thirsty and ambitious projects. The banner of Cortes, according to Robertson, whose work, by the way, has all the merit of the romance, added to the correctness and general truth of the history, had upon it a large cross, with this inscription, “Let us follow the cross, for under this sign shall we conquer.” The “*In hoc signo vinces*” of Constantine, may be forgiven, when we learn the character of the Chris-

tian Pagan; but truly, it would be difficult to find, in the whole annals of audacity, a similar instance of impudence. The finger of devotion guiding to blood shed and murder.

NOTE 4, PAGE 9.

Guatimozin.

This brave Indian, appears in all the characteristics of a hero of Romance, fully worthy of the middle ages. After warring against Cortes, with all the undeviating firmness, joined to the experience of the veteran, we find him, at all times calm, dignified and manly; neither too much exhilarated when crowned with conquest, nor prostrated by the reverse of defeat. The following passage from Robertson, may show this:—"When conducted to Cortes, he appeared, neither with the sullen fierceness of a barbarian, nor with the dejection of a suppliant. "I have done," said he, "what became a monarch. I have defended my people to the last extremity. Nothing now remains but to die. Take this dagger," laying his hand on one which Cortes wore, "plant it in my breast, and put an end to a life which can no longer be of use." Vol. ii. p. 48, 49.

NOTE 5, PAGE 9.

"Children of the bright sun."

The sun has been usually the first object of worship among all barbarous nations, as the supposed, and only visible source of life, light, heat, &c.—but the Mexicans and Peruvians went still farther and claimed to be immediately descended from it. Their altars, dedicated to its worship, were never honored with any thing less worthy than human beings.

NOTE 6, PAGE 9.

*"Not even the chance remains to flee,—
But that is not a thought for thee."*

Amidst vicissitudes and reverses that would have crushed any humbler spirit, the energies of Cortes, never for a single moment forsook him. Within an enemy's walls, surrounded by men of his own nation, jealous of his power, and perpetually thwarting him by machinations and treasons—he rose superior to circumstances, and seemed invigorated by every overthrow.

NOTE 7, PAGE 9.

———“*Their God of war,*” &c.

The fearful picture given by Robertson, cannot be surpassed in fiction. “On a signal given, the priest in the principal temple struck the great drum consecrated to the God of war. No sooner did the Mexicans hear its doleful sound, calculated to inspire them with contempt of death and enthusiastic ardor, than they rushed upon the enemy with frantic rage, &c.” and again, after their victory, they (the Spaniards) found that forty of their fellow-soldiers had fallen into the hands of the enemy, he proceeds:—“The approach of the night, though it delivered the dejected Spaniards from the attacks of the enemy, ushered in, what was hardly less grievous, the noise of their barbarous triumph, and of the horrid festivals with which they celebrated their victory. Every quarter of the city was illuminated; the great temple shone with such peculiar splendor, that the Spaniards could plainly see the people in motion, and the priests busy in hastening the preparations for the death of the prisoners. Through the gloom, they fancied that they discerned their companions by the whiteness of their skins, as they were stript naked, and compelled to dance before the image of the God to whom they were offered. They heard the shrieks of those who were sacrificed, and thought that they could distinguish each unhappy victim by the well-known sound of his voice.”

NOTE 8, PAGE 19.

“*Put fire unto the brigantine.*”

The fleet with which Cortes sailed for New Spain, was destroyed by his orders, but at a much earlier period than that to which the Poem has reference. The crisis, of the Poem, however, requiring it where it is, I have used the license commonly conceded to the writers of fiction, by which History may be perverted at pleasure. After stating the intrigues by which Cortes prevailed on his men, to adopt this measure, (the destruction of the fleet, Robertson proceeds to say—“Thus, from an effort of magnanimity, to which there is nothing parallel in history, five hundred men voluntarily consented to be shut up in a hostile country, filled with powerful and unknown nations; and having precluded every means of escape, left themselves without any resource,

but their own valor and perseverance." Hist. Am. vol i. p. 414.

NOTE 9, PAGE 28.

"Do I repose on flowers."

According to the Historian, I have here been guilty of a much greater violation of the fact than may well be passed over. Upon the final conquest of Mexico, and before Guatimozin had yet been made prisoner, he ordered all of his treasures, knowing them to be the principal object with the Spaniards, to be thrown into the lake. This it was necessary should be concealed. It was, that this fact should be made known, that the royal favorite, on a bed of coals, turned to his monarch an appealing eye, who sternly replied—"Am I reposing on a bed of flowers." The favorite persevered and died. In the text, I have no such reason for perseverance, for Guatimozin, in the preceding pages has already told where the treasure has been thrown, and his torture can only be considered wanton, or meant to extort a further confession, as to any residue that might yet be found. The reader is at liberty to believe which he pleases.

NOTE 10, PAGE 38.

"Dark Acapulco, frowning to the sky."

Acapulco is a mountain in Peru. I wanted one of four syllables in Mexico, and applied it therefore to one of the many that gird the plain of the "High City."

NOTE 11, PAGE 44.

———"Spain
Valued his worth, and with his honors gave
Neglect and shame."

The last days of Cortes, may be given in Robertson's own words:—"Disgusted with ill success to which he had not been accustomed, and weary of contending with adversaries to whom he considered it as a disgrace to be opposed, he once more (A. D. 1540) sought redress in his native country. But his reception there was very different from that which gratitude, and even decency, ought to have secured for him. The merit of his ancient exploits, was already, in a great

service of moment was now expected from a man of declining years, and who began to be unfortunate. The Emperor behaved to him with cold civility; his ministers treated him, sometimes with neglect, sometimes with insolence. His grievances received no redress; his claims were urged without effect; and after several years spent in fruitless application to ministers and judges, an occupation the most irksome and mortifying to a man of high spirit, who had moved in a sphere where he was more accustomed to command than to solicit, Cortes ended his days on the second of December one thousand five hundred and forty seven, in the sixty-second year of his age.

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